Oriental Bird Club

Bulletin 25 • June 1997

The Oriental Bird Club aims to:

- **encourage an interest in the birds of the Oriental region and their conservation.**
- **liaise with and promote the work of existing regional societies.**
- **collate and publish material on Oriental birds.**

Two bulletins and a journal, *Forktail*, are published annually

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Membership of OBC
Membership of the Club is open to all and for 1997 costs £15 per annum (£10 reduced rate for nationals living in Oriental countries who cannot afford the full rate), £20 Family, £25 Supporting Member (funding one Oriental member in addition to ordinary membership), £25 Libraries and academic institutions, and £45 Business Supporters. Special arrangements for payment exist in USA, Thailand and India. To join or for further details please contact the Membership Secretary, OBC, c/o The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 2DL, UK.

OBC Web Site
http://www.netlink.co.uk/users/aw/obchome.html

Cover illustration:
Chestnut-throated Partridge *Tetraophasis obscurus* by Dan Cole.
Read more about recent Chinese reports on this species in Around the Orie
page 14.

Contents

2 **Club News**

6 **Conservation Fund**
Compiled by Melanie Heath and Carol Inskipp

14 **Around the Orient**
Compiled by Colin Poole

25 **Birdwatching Areas**
District Dera Ismail Khan, Pakistan
Juha Kylanpaa

30 **Free Press**
Compiled by Guy Dutson

31 **ClubWatch Round-Up**

52 **Stray Feathers**

58 **To the Editor**
- **Black-necked Cranes acting as foster parents**
  Otto Pfister
- **Spectacular movements of hornbills, possibly Plain-pouched Hornbills *Aceros subruficollis*, in Peninsular Malaysia**
  Ho Hua Chew and Sutari Supari

61 **From the Field**
Compiled by Craig Robson

19 **Conservation on the Sangihe and Talaud Islands, Sulawesi, Indonesian**
Jon Riley

27 **The status of the birds of Dibru-Saikhowa Sanctuary, Assam, India**
Anwaruddin Choudhury

32 **Field identification of Asian *Gyps* vultures**
Per Alström

50 **The Moluccan Scrubfowl *Eulipoa wallacei***
Dr C. J. Heij and Dr Christny F. E. Rompas

56 **Photospot: Whiskered Pitta *Pitta kochi***
Pete Morris

70 **Recently Published**
- **Wild Thailand**
- **Where to watch birds in Asia**
- **The Book of Indian Birds**
- **Munias and Mannikins**
- **Where to Watch Birds and other Wildlife in Hong Kong and Guangdong**
- **The Avifauna of Yunnan China, vol. 1, non-passeriformes**
- **Peafowl, their conservation, breeding and management**
- **The Avifauna of Wuliangsuhai, Inner Mongolia**
- **Towards an ornithology of the Himalayas: systematics, ecology and vocalizations of Nepal birds**

- **CD-ROM: Voices of the Borneo Rainforest**

Club News

Diary Dates

15-17th August 1997,
British Birdwatching Fair, Rutland, UK

The Club will again be present at the Fair, with this year an expanded stall including OBC displays, raffles and merchandise. Please come and visit us.

Sunday 24th August 1997,
Blakeney Village Hall, Norfolk, UK

At this year's annual UK summer Bank holiday meeting, speakers will include Ray Tipper, well known for his excellent slides of waterbirds from Mai Po.

10-17th October 1997,
Regional Meeting in conjunction with Malaysian Nature Society – Bird Group, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Please note these dates have been slightly rearranged, since being announced in the last OBC Bulletin.

Entitled 'Birding in South-East Asia', the meeting will be opened on the evening of Friday 10th October and will be followed on the Saturday by a full day of talks, from a range of local, regional and international speakers. On the morning of Sunday 12th October a post-meeting tour will leave for Fraser's Hill and Taman Negara, lead by OBC co-rep and professional tour guide Mike Chong. Participants will return to Kuala Lumpur on Friday 17th October with the option of travelling to Singapore to join the Singapore Bird Race organised by the Nature Society Singapore Bird Group on 18-19th October.

Entrance to all parts of the meeting in Kuala Lumpur, including dinner on the Friday and Saturday nights, will be Malaysian RM 100, not including accommodation. Local hotels for the meeting and all arrangements for the excursion can be arranged through Meranti Nature Tours Sdn. Bhd. in Kuala Lumpur. The cost of the post-meeting tour will be Malaysian RM 1740, based on two people sharing, or RM 2150 for a single room. In addition, if there is sufficient interest, OBC is hoping to arrange a flight package for members from Europe, *via* leading travel agents and OBC Corporate Sponsors, WildWings, the return cost of flights for which is likely to be in the region of £389 (Aeroflot *via* Moscow) through £454 (Gulf Air) to £589 (Malaysian). Note that these prices exclude the £10 UK airport departure tax. People wishing to attend should contact Wildwings directly for firm quotes initially, however, if there is enough early interest, it should be possible to get a group discount on these prices. Anyone interested in the possibility of attending or contributing to either the meeting or the excursion, or wanting further details please contact one of the following; for those in South-East Asia, Mike Chong, Meranti Nature Tours Sdn. Bhd., 223C Jalan Bandar 13, Taman Melawati Metro, 53100 Kuala Lumpur. Fax +60 (0)3 4056492. Or for those outside of the region, Brian Sykes c/o OBC or fax +44 (0)1661 821807.

Saturday 13th December 1997,
AGM. Zoological Society Meeting Room, Regent's Park, London, UK

Speakers will include Nigel Collar of BirdLife International.

February 1998, Joint Meeting with Dutch Birding, Utrecht, Netherlands

Further details will be announced in the next OBC Bulletin.

Donations to OBC Conservation Fund

We are very grateful to the following for their financial support towards the work of the OBC Conservation Fund.

The Emirates Natural History Group for again making a very generous donation, providing £500 to support the work of Col. R. T. Chacko on breeding Black-necked Cranes *Grus nigricollis* in Ladakh, and a further £500 to Mian Mohammad Shafique for his work on the effects of hunting on migrating Sarus *G. antigone*, Demoiselle *G. virgo* and Common Cranes *G. grus* in the North West Frontier Province of Pakistan.

Several OBC members have expressed their wish to support the Conservation Fund in a substantial way and, in particular, Ed Keeble has donated £500 to be used towards a specific small survey grant, preferably in China, as determined by Council and Thomas Benedict has donated US$500 towards a small survey grant. Many others have sent up to £50 donations with their 1997 subscriptions and, although we cannot write to acknowledge every one, we would like to express our grateful thanks to all these members for their support for the important work of the Conservation Fund.

Finally we would also like to thank 'Athene Northampton' [Richard Eden, Mark Williams, Paul Fuller and Martin Overton (all OBC members)] who, for seeing a Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola*, were awarded the prize for rarest bird of the day in the 1996 Birdwatch UK Bird Race. The team generously donated half the prize of £200 from Rare Bird Alert to the OBC Conservation Fund. Also the Scarborough Bird Group for a donation of £40 in return for a talk given by Mike Blair.

Full details of all the projects supported above and others can be found in Conservation Fund News on p.6.

New Representative

The Bird Conservation Nepal society is to take over from Rajendra Suwal as the OBC representative in Nepal. The person to contact will be the Secretary, currently Harris Raj.

Mr C. S. Torei receives the OBC mega-prize draw WildWings voucher from Chris Packham

Leica

WildWings

New OBC Sponsor, Club 300

The OBC are pleased to announce the Swedish 'Club 300', as a new sponsor. Club 300 operates a 'birdline' and pager information service on rare birds found in Sweden with 80% of the profits generated being donated to conservation projects around the world. Since 1990 approximately US$240,000 has been distributed. We are delighted to announce that Club 300 is funding the Relict Gull *Larus relictus* survey in Inner Mongolia, for more details of this project, see Conservation Fund on page 11.

New Business Supporter

We are pleased to welcome Aonyx Environmental Services of Kuching, Sarawak, East Malaysia to the Club's business supporters scheme. Their membership will go to support three Malaysian honorary members.

Changes in OBC Council

Brian Sykes has taken over the role of OBC Secretary from Mike Blair. The committee would like to thank Mike for his hard work for the Club. Unfortunately he has had to stand down for family reasons.

Please note that the address of Richard Thomas the Bulletin editor has changed. In particular he now does **not** have a contact fax number. Material for the Bulletin can be mailed to him at 59 Coolidge Gardens, Cottenham, CB4 4RQ, United Kingdom or emailed to; thomasr@rsc.org

Report on December 1996 AGM

The 12th OBC AGM, generously sponsored again by OBC Corporate Sponsors NHBS, was well attended and a great success. Tim Loseby began the day with some excellent slides of a recent trip to southern India. Tom Evans then gave a fascinating account of the results of recent surveys in Laos - one of the least known countries in the region - and the conservation issues that are being faced there. A last minute addition to the schedule was Otto Pfister, visiting from Delhi, who impressed the audience with a selection of superb slides taken on his travels throughout India. Finally Morten Strange, OBC co-rep for Denmark presented some thought provoking ideas on conservation and development in South-East Asia based on his years living and working in Indonesia and Singapore, and of course accompanied by his excellent slides.

The annual OBC mega-prize draw took a total £2,500, and the main prize of a pair of Leica 8x32 binoculars, donated by Leica Cameras, was won by Alan Wheeldon, whilst the second prize of a £250 travel voucher donated by WildWings was won by Mr C. S. Torei, who accepted his prize from Chris Packham, to whom we are grateful for making the draw. We would also like to thank NHBS, New Holland, A&C Black, Pica Press, WildSounds and Fuji for donating the other prizes and Birding World, Birdwatch and British Birds for distributing the tickets. We would also like to thank New Holland, NHBS, WildSounds and Pica Press for donating raffle prizes on the day.

The draw from among those members who sent in a new Standing Order incorporating the 1997 membership rates or who paid for 3 years at the new rates was made at the Club's AGM. Dr William Bourne, Alex Randall and Nigel Wheatley had their names drawn from the box and have each been sent a copy of 'An Annotated Checklist of the Birds of the Oriental Region'. Our congratulations to them and our thanks also to Stan Howe for delivering Dr Bourne's copy personally. We should also like to thank all those who returned Standing Orders or who paid for 3 years subscription, as this saves a great deal of administration time for the hard-worked Council.

Finally we would like to thank all those who helped with the catering, particularly Margaret Sykes who both organised and made most of the food, and Ethelyn Counsell who assisted with both baking and operating the stall during the day.

Questionnaire results

Thanks to all those who took part in the OBC members questionnaire, we had over 250 replies from 38 countries, providing us with a lot of very useful information about how members perceive the running and future direction of the Club.

When all the results have been fully analysed a detailed report will follow. However, preliminary analysis indicates some interesting results. It is the Club's publications (particularly the Bulletin) and the work of the Conservation Fund that members find both most interesting and most important. Although meetings were not judged to be quite so important, interestingly a significant proportion of those responding would be prepared to contribute towards the cost of OBC meetings they attend. In terms of the Club's future direction, members see expanding the Conservation Fund and country special Bulletins as being by far the most important priorities.

Special thanks are due to those members who volunteered to help in the running of the Club, this is much appreciated and everybody will be contacted in due course.

Apology

In the last issue of 'Club News' we congratulated Professor Chen Tso-Hsing on his birthday. It should of course have read Professor Cheng Tso-Hsin. We apologise to Professor Cheng for this error.

Ber van Perlo

The OBC would like to make it clear that the artist of the superb Megapodes plate featured in Bulletin 24 by kind permission of the publishers, Oxford University Press and taken from *The Megapodes* by Jones, Dekker and Roselaar was, of course, Ber van Perlo.

NHBS OBC Mailorder Book Service

We are pleased to announce that the Natural History Book Service (NHBS) will again be running the OBC Mailorder Book Service. This year, however, the NHBS will not be producing a special separate catalogue. Instead the full new bird book catalogue will be sent to all members as a separate mailing in the near future.

World Birding Conference, Swanwick, Derbyshire, UK 4-6th April 1997

For the world birder with a keen interest in conservation, Swanwick was THE place to be over the first weekend of April.

The first World Birding Conference was an opportunity to catch up on research projects from six continents (only Australasia was omitted). From the OBC region we heard talks on Endemic Bird Areas of Asia by Mike Crosby and Bird Migration Through Malaysia by David Wells. Asad Rahmani was also expected to speak but the airlines conspired to prevent his arrival from India.

The conference was a collaboration between all the regional bird clubs together with the British Trust for Ornithology and the British Ornithologists' Union. A varied programme took us from Antarctic seabirds to American raptors to the curious endemics of Madagascar.

And there was also time for debates on the ethics of collecting - and the value of ecotourism. Clearly, world birders venture to areas with little or no tourist infrastructure in search of little-known species. Should we? Or do these journeys impact on fragile habitats and human communities which should be left alone? If Gurney's Pitta *Pitta gurneyi* can be used as a case study, then birders' visits to its last refuge in Thailand are pumping money into the local economy and boosting the value of the bird to local people: obviously a positive step. Away from the ethical dilemmas, a fiendish quiz with photos, feathers and sound recordings sorted the world birder from the armchair traveller.

And in the bar, the stories of birding in exotic lands got better and better as the number of empty glasses accumulated.

But with only 200 participants at a venue that could hold twice that number, the enthusiasm for a World Birding Conference in the UK seems limited. It may have been the first AND last such event. That should not be allowed to happen and planning for, perhaps, a one-day event in 1998/9 should start immediately because those involved in threatened birds worldwide need to talk as often as possible – and not just at lofty ornithological congresses. Thanks to Brian and Margaret Sykes for manning the OBC stand at this event.

Contributed by Adrian Pitches

OBC Publications

The OBC wishes to apologise for the very late appearance of some of their publications, especially of Forktail 12. Please be patient! The editors are all extremely busy people with all the OBC work being carried out in their spare time! The OBC Council has agreed the following timetable in order to try to bring the dates that publications appear back on track.

In 1997, Bulletin 25 should appear on time in June. It will be followed in July by Forktail 12. Bulletin 26, the 'Sri Lanka Special' will appear as usual in October 1997.

Forktail 13 will appear in January 1998 to be followed by Bulletin 27 in May, then Forktail 14 in July and finally Bulletin 28 in October. In subsequent years it is proposed to follow the pattern of the first Bulletin in May, followed by Forktail in July and the second Bulletin in October. Please bear with us whilst these changes are being brought about.

OBC members help save Asia's threatened birds

The Oriental Bird Club is delighted to forge even closer links with BirdLife International - the leading authority on the status of the world's birds - through their Asia Red Data Book project. As many members will know, BirdLife commenced work on Threatened birds of Asia in 1994. The book compilers, led by Nigel J. Collar, will soon be soliciting the help of OBC members. OBC will distribute a questionnaire to all members who are not nationals of Oriental countries. The questionnaire asks for basic information on the countries in which you have seen globally threatened birds. Oriental nationals will be contacted directly by the national co-ordinator in their country. From Gurney's Pitta *Pitta gurneyi* to Steller's Sea Eagle *Haliaeetus pelagicus*, your information may be vital. Please do not assume that your observations will be of no interest or will be duplicated by others. As an OBC member, you have declared your interest in the future of Asia's birds. You now have an opportunity to help save them.

Further information on the Red Data Book project can be sought from James Lowen at the BirdLife Cambridge office (BirdLife International, Wellbrook Court, Girton Road, Cambridge CB3 0NA; Tel: +44 1223 277318; Fax: +44 1223 277200; email: james.lowen@birdlife.org.uk).

Sri Lanka Special

A reminder that the October Bulletin this year will be a Sri Lanka Special. Anyone who is interested in sponsoring or advertising in this Bulletin is asked to contact the Promotions Officer, Richard Eden at 31 Claystones, West Hunsbury, Northampton NN4 9UY, UK. Tel/Fax +44 (0) 1604 769 109. email: richard.eden@rohm.co.uk

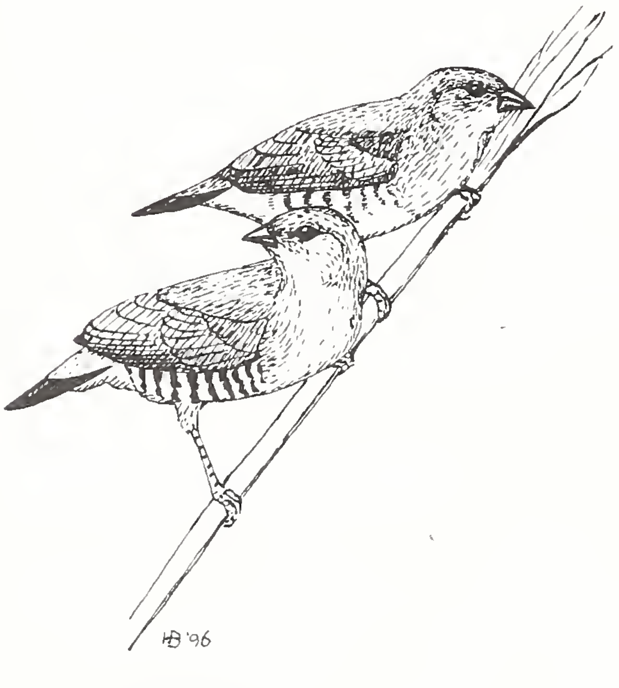
Anyone who would like to contribute line drawings, photographs or articles on Sri Lanka should contact Richard Thomas at the address given on page 3 as soon as possible please.

Conservation Fund

Compiled by Melanie Heath and Carol Inskipp

A total of more than £10,000, supporting 20 projects, was donated in grants for conservation work in the Orient in 1996, and already a number of awards have been made this year. OBC would like to thank the many individuals and organisations whose generous support and sponsorship made this possible. We are also very pleased to announce that Leica wish to continue their support in 1997 and will donate £750 towards the Forktail Leica Award 1997 (total £1,500). Similarly we are very grateful to WildWings who will sponsor the OBC-WildWings Conservation Award (£1,000) again in 1997 to the tune of £600. The closing date for applications for these main awards is 1st September 1997. Applications for small grants may be made at any time during the year, but ideally a few months before the commencement date of the project.

Forktail Leica Award 1995 White-naped Tit Survey, Gujarat and Rajasthan, India



Green Avadavat Amandava formosa *by Hil Bruinsma*

The 1995 Forktail Leica Award funded a survey of the status and distribution of the White-naped Tit *Parus nuchalis* in northern Gujarat and Rajasthan. The White-naped Tit is a globally threatened species which only occurs in India. Surveys were carried out in three districts of Gujarat. The species was found to be patchily distributed throughout Kutch, but nowhere common and was also recorded in Banaskantha district. In Rajasthan seven districts were surveyed and the species was found In Pali, Ajmere, Jalore, Nagaur and Jaipur.

Observations on the status of the species indicate that its survival is dependent on its habitat of tropical thorn forest and the conservation of dead and decaying Acacia trees which it uses for roosting and nesting. The patchy distribution of this threatened species may be due to the fragmentation and loss of the scrub thorn forest by human interference. Causes of deforestation in Gujarat and Rajasthan include illegal charcoal-making, collection of fuel-wood and fodder, and clearance for cultivation. The species is also threatened by the invasion of its habitat by exotic plants. During the study evidence was found showing that the Great Tit *Parus major* and White-naped Tit are not mutually exclusive in their distribution. The Green Avadavat *Amandava formosa*, another globally threatened species endemic to India, was also observed in Gujarat and Rajasthan during the study.

J K Tiwari

Spot-billed Pelican in Assam

The globally threatened Spot-billed Pelican *Pelecanus philippensis* was formerly widespread in India, but has suffered a considerable decline in the past few decades. A study was initiated to find out the current status of the species in Assam with a grant of £500. The survey which was initiated in February 1996 revealed that the range of the Spot-billed Pelican is now primarily restricted to the protected areas of Assam, although a small population has been recorded from the non-protected areas as well.

In the 1995-96 season breeding was confirmed in Kaziranga National Park (314 nests), Orang Wildlife Sanctuary (23 nests), Pabitora Wildlife Sanctuary (2 nests), Majuli River Island (14 nests) and in Ghilamara near Bordoibam-Beelmukh Wildlife Sanctuary (3 nests). Kaziranga is undoubtedly the key breeding site of the species in Assam, although only nine nests were found during the 1994-95 season. The pelican also utilised other sites during winter for feeding: Dibru-Saikhowa Wildlife Sanctuary, Deepor Beel Wildlife Sanctuary (near Guwahati city), Pandihing Bird Sanctuary in Sibsagar District, some parts of the Brahmaputra River tract from Orang to Lakhimpur, Bordoloni wetland near Lakhimpur, and Burachapori Wildlife Sanctuary. Around 1000 Spot-billed Pelicans were observed in different wetlands of Kaziranga in March 1996.

The conservation of the Spot-billed Pelican in Assam is a challenging one, but the location of most of the breeding colonies within protected areas is a positive sign. Although Majuli River Island is not an official protected area, the local people have taken the initiative to implement conservation measures to protect the species' nesting colonies and other sites. This effort deserves appreciation. Follow-up conservation measures have been discussed with officials from the Assam Forest Department, Gauhati University, and the Aaranayak Nature Club, a local non-governmental organisation.

Bibhab Kumar Talukdar

Narayani River Survey, Nepal

A vast network of mountain streams join together to form the Narayani river system, the third largest in Nepal. A stretch of the river 58.9 km long forms the western boundary of the Royal Chitwan National Park which is situated in the subtropical central lowland terai of the country. This stretch of the river forms a relatively secure refuge for waterbirds since it is well protected through park regulations. A grant of £500 funded a survey of this river stretch between December 1995 and February 1996. The objectives were to prepare a checklist of bird species using the study area and to determine the frequency and density of birds there. It was hoped that the study would be a useful contribution to the better understanding of waterbirds of the Narayani river and also provide the basic information necessary for their conservation.

The river fans out in alluvial braided channels, bordered by riverine forest and grasslands which provide suitable habitats for a wide diversity of birds. At the Nepalese/Indian border the river is dammed near Tribeni. During the three month study period the entire 58.9 km stretch was surveyed three times. The survey was limited to the river channels, banks and islands and to bird species directly associated with the river. The survey confirmed that the Narayani river is of outstanding importance for migratory and resident waterbirds. A total of 62 waterbird species was recorded, including the globally threatened Lesser Adjutant *Leptoptilus javanicus* and Black-bellied Tern *Sterna acuticauda*. Sections of the river which held the highest density of waterbirds were identified.

Despite the strict protection measures operating in the park, birds using the river are threatened by the activities of local communities inhabiting the western bank which lies outside the park. These activities are increasing and include disturbance, illegal hunting, fuel-wood collection, fishing, cattle grazing and replacement of forest by agricultural land along the river course. Illegal bird hunting near the Tribeni barrage seriously affects populations of migratory waterbirds. The river is being polluted by various human activities including industrial effluent from the Vrikuti Paper Mill located near Narayanghat.

A wide-ranging conservation awareness programme for local residents using the participatory approach is needed to ensure long term survival of waterbirds using the Narayani river. Park authorities in close coordination with the appropriate Indian authorities should take the lead to stop the illegal hunting at Tribeni. Regular monitoring of bird populations is also recommended. Finally the entire 58.9 km section of the Narayani river should be declared an area of special ornithological significance to ensure better management.

Narayan Pd Dhakal

Malabar Grey Hornbill Breeding Biology, India

A grant of £500 funded a study to determine the nesting habitat requirements and breeding biology of the Malabar Grey Hornbill *Ocyceros griseus*, an endemic Indian species. It is a fruit-eating specialist of the Western Ghats, which plays an important role in the dynamics of the moist evergreen forests it inhabits. The study was carried out in the Indira Gandhi Wildlife Sanctuary in the Anaimalai Hills of the southern Western Ghats in Tamil Nadu state between December 1993 and May 1994. The results of the survey of nesting habitat requirements are given in OBC Bulletin 21:14.

The breeding biology was studied by monitoring ten nests. The nesting period seemed to be synchronised with the peak in food availability and the onset of the south-west monsoon. One nest was observed intensively over the 87 day nesting period. At the end of the nesting period, the female and the young simultaneously broke out of the nest. A total of 2,397 items of food was delivered to the inmates of the nest. They included six species of lipid (fat)-rich and nine species of sugar-rich fruits, and at least 14 kinds of animal matter. Lipid-rich fruits formed a major component (37%) of the diet during nesting. *Ficus* (fig) fruits formed 26%, and animal matter 13.8% of the diet of the hornbills plastered inside the nest. The frequency of sugar- and lipid-rich fruits delivered to the nest was significantly greater in the period before the young hatched. After hatching the frequency of animal food delivered was higher and may provide the growing chick with essential nutritious food. Although the Malabar Grey Hornbill uses a wide range of food resources, it was observed that a few species of rare tropical trees producing lipid-rich fruits during the nesting period play an important role in the maintenance of the species. If the Malabar Grey Hornbill is to be conserved, active conservation of its habitat is imperative as it has highly specialised feeding and nesting requirements.

Divya Mudappa

Avifaunal Survey of Maduganga Estuary, Sri Lanka

A grant of £500 funded a survey of the birds of Maduganga estuary and associated islets between December 1992 and December 1993. The 7 km^2 estuary has 15 true islets and is situated in the lowland wet zone of south-western Sri Lanka. The vegetation of the islets and surrounding mainland nowadays largely consists of homesteads, plantations of cinnamon, coconut and rubber, and a small amount of scrub. Cinnamon plantations account for the largest area on the islets. Narrow strips of mangroves fringe the islets and mainland. Several islets have permanent human habitation and islets with cinnamon plantations are inhabited by people during extraction periods. Eleven islets were sampled during the study and five of these were selected for regular sampling. The selection was made to include different sized islets and all the habitat types present in the islet system.

Birds on the islets were counted using the variable circular plot method. The data were analysed to indicate the composition, abundance, prevalence and spread of species. In addition, the distribution of species amongst habitats, and density of terns were calculated. Sixty bird species were recorded in the estuary and associated islets; of these 51 were residents and nine were migratory. Of all the habitat types on the islets, plantations supported the least percentage of bird species (26.4% of landbirds). The homestead was the most species-rich habitat type harbouring 71.9% of landbirds. Species associated with water were poorly represented in the area, largely because of the absence of marshy areas and mudflats and because the mainland and islets do not have a shore-line around them, abruptly giving way to fairly deep water. Whiskered Terns *Childonias hybridus* appeared to use certain parts of the estuary sporadically in high densities.

Recommendations were made for conserving the estuary and increasing the diversity of birds. These should be carried out recognising the needs of local people and their economic gains from the area. Keeping mangroves intact will safeguard islets from erosion, provide breeding places for fish and prawns and shelter for species like Little Heron *Butorides striatus*. The number of habitat types available on an islet seems to determine the number of bird species present. There is potential to increase the number of habitat types on several of the larger islets. Maintaining 'Ja-Kotu' (bamboo structures constructed in the estuary to catch fish and prawns) would support fish-eating resident and migratory species.

Mahendra Siriwardhane

GRANT ANNOUNCEMENTS

Forktail-Leica Award 1996

We are pleased to announce that the 1996 Forktail Leica Award, worth £1500, went to Pratap Singh to carry out important new surveys of bird life in the little-known north eastern Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh. The award, sponsored by the high quality optics company LEICA, will pay for research in six locations across Arunachal Pradesh, home to several globally threatened species including Ward's Trogon *Harpactes wardi* and Rusty-throated Wren-babbler *Spelaeornis badeigularis*. Besides providing much new information on the distribution of many rare eastern Himalayan birds, 19 of which are endemic to the region, the survey will identify areas requiring protection.

OBC-WildWings Conservation Awareness Award 1996

The 1996 OBC-WildWings Conservation Awareness Award, worth £1000, has been given to a team led by Sunita Rao for work on the Nicobar and Andaman Islands in the Bay of Bengal between India and Burma. This award, generously supported by the travel company WILDWINGS, will pay for educational materials to be used at nature camps for local students and teachers. The camps will emphasise the need for islanders to cherish their rainforests, mangroves and coral reefs.

Indian Bustard in Rajasthan

The Emirates Natural History Group has kindly donated £500 to OBC to fund Dr Asad Rahmani's work on the protection of the Indian Bustard *Ardeotis nigriceps*, the 'State bird' of Rajasthan, India. Dr Rahmani aims to publicise the importance of this highly threatened species in the Thar Desert through the distribution of educational pamphlets and posters and meetings with key decision makers in the area. It is hoped that the project will result in a better understanding of the species and the problems it faces.

Bird survey in Arunachal Pradesh

A small grant of £500 has been awarded to Raman Athreya to carry out an intensive survey of birds in Arunachal Pradesh, North East India. The survey will take place in either Namdapha Tiger Reserve or the Dibang Valley Wildlife Sanctuary. These areas are protected but very little is known about their fauna, the accessibility being difficult, and only a small fraction of the area has been surveyed for birds. Both sanctuaries span areas in excess of 200 km^2, extend over an altitudinal range of several thousand metres and support some of the last remaining tracts of good forest in the region.

Survey of Nongk-Ilem Sanctuary

A small grant of £500 has been given to Dr Anwaruddin Choudhury to conduct a survey of the birds of Nongkhyllem Wildlife Sanctuary and surrounding areas in Meghalaya, in north eastern India. This is a region of high biodiversity and it falls within the Eastern Himalayan Endemic Bird Area. Species found include Manipur Bush Quail *Perdicula manipurensis*, White-checked Partridge *Arborophila atrogularis*, Rufous-necked Hornbill *Aceros nipalensis* and Blyth's Kingfisher *Alcedo hercules*. The sanctuary is poorly known and until now has not been covered by any systematic bird survey. The survey will provide valuable baseline data which will help protect these rapidly diminishing and precious forests.

Black-necked Cranes

Colonel Tommy Chako has been awarded a grant of £500 to study the globally threatened Black-necked Crane *Grus nigricollis* breeding in Ladakh in India and then wintering in Bhutan. This project will included studies of the nesting biology, migration routes and the impact of pesticides and will result in the production of a conservation plan for the species.

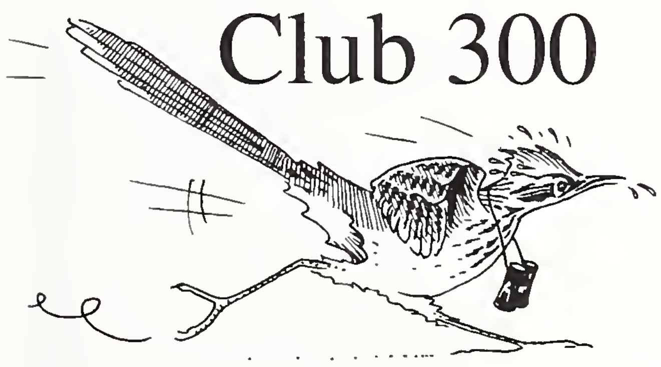
Crane migration in Pakistan

OBC has funded Mian Muhammad Shariq for his project investigating populations of cranes (Common Crane *Grus grus*, Demoiselle Crane *G. virgo* and possible Siberian Cranes *G. leucogeranus*) migrating over the wetlands of Lakki, Bannu and D. I. Khan in Pakistan. He aims to collect information on important migration routes and staging areas and also to raise the awareness, especially amongst hunters, of the importance of the conservation of the species.

Threatened species of Yancheng marshes

A grant of £500 has been awarded to Wang Hui to study the threatened species and their habitats in Yancheng marshes along the central coast of East China. This is an important roosting area for 15 globally threatened species including the Black-faced Spoonbill *Platalea minor*. The marshes cover a large area with many inaccessible mudflats and estuaries which have not been covered by previous surveys. The project will collect important data in these areas which will help lead to the protection of the area from threats of local economic growth and development.

Relict Gull survey in Inner Mongolia



A grant of £500, kindly donated by Club 300 will fund Xing Lianlian to survey the status and distribution of the globally near-threatened Relict Gull *Larus relictus* in the Gaxun Nur and Sogo Nur Wetland in the deserts of western Inner Mongolia, China. The wetland is fed by seasonal run-off from the Ruo Shui river in the south and numerous streams from mountains in southern Mongolia. Little is known about the birds or other wildlife in the wetland. From April to October data will be collected on the Relict Gull and other threatened bird species and their habitats.

Conservation awareness campaign on East Java

Koservasi Satwa Bagi Kehidupan (KSBK) Animals Conservation for Life, have been awarded a grant of £500 for their education and awareness campaign to conserve Indonesian wildlife. The project concentrates on East Java and through working with local nature clubs, colleges, schools and other non-governmental organisations in the area aims to increase public awareness about the importance of wildlife and species protection. Discussions and workshops will be held addressing wildlife protection, the problems of wildlife trade, threats and necessary actions. This will be aided by the production of posters and newsletters relating to wildlife protection.

Nesting ecology of island breeding birds

R. K. Sharma has received a grant of £500 to survey resident and migratory birds in Chambal Sanctuary in Uranachal Pradesh, India. The sanctuary covers a stretch of 425 km of the Chambal river and, unlike most north Indian rivers that flow through densely populated areas, is relatively undisturbed and provides refuge to a host of migratory and resident bird species. The study will particularly examine the population status, habitat preferences and nesting success of the rarer island breeding birds including the globally threatened Indian Skimmer *Rynchops albicollis*. This will lead to the production of a management plan for these riverine species.

Nam Cat Tien National Park

OBC have made a donation of five books with a total value of US$450 to the Nam Cat Tien National Park in Vietnam. Additionally a pair of binoculars has been provided by the RSPB. The park is situated within the South Vietnamese Lowlands Endemic Bird Area, an area extremely important for biodiversity, and home to a range of endemic and threatened species. The park staff are well trained and motivated but unfortunately do not have equipment or reference books. It is hoped that these materials will help them in their task of compiling inventories and surveying the park's resources.

Survey in Pandihing Bird Sanctuary, Assam, India

A grant of £500 was awarded to Rathin Barman to fund fully an ornithological survey of Pandihing, a proposed bird sanctuary in Assam, which is currently poorly known. There are mixed habitats of grassland and wetland at Padihing which is situated close to the Brahmaputra river. Pandihing harbours a wide variety of bird species including the globally threatened Greater Adjutant *Leptoptilos dubius* and Lesser Adjutant *L. javanicus*. The Black-necked Stork *Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus* which is now rare and declining in Asia, bred in Pandihing in 1995. The other main aim of the project is to raise awareness amongst local people about bird conservation and to seek their support in conserving birds and their habitats at Pandihing. Meetings with local people will be arranged during each visit to the bird sanctuary and birdwatching trips for local young people will be organised. Recommendations for bird conservation at Pandihing will be made and sent to the Forest Department in Assam.

Wader Survey along the Indian East Coast

A grant of £500 will fund fully Dr S. Balachandran to carry out a wader survey along the east coast of India from Chilka Lake in Orissa to Rameswaram in Tamil Nadu. The aims are to find out the current status and distribution of Asian Dowitcher *Limnodromus semipalmatus* and the globally threatened Spoon-billed Sandpiper *Calidris pygmeus*, and to record other rare wintering waders present. Current threats to the species will also be identified and management recommendations will be made. These coastal wetlands include diverse habitats: mudflats, sand flats, brackish coastal lagoons, salt pans and fresh waters. A rapid preliminary survey will be undertaken during the first month of the study to identify wader sites other than the well known sites. During the second month an intensive survey will be carried out at Chilka Lake and Point Calimere, currently the only known wintering sites of these species, as well as any other important wader site(s) discovered during the preliminary survey.

Avifauna of Sacred Groves in Kerala, India

C. Sashikumar carried out a survey of four sacred groves in the Kannur District of Kerala from February 1995 to May 1996, funded by an OBC grant (see OBC Bulletin 24:8-9). Following the successful outcome of this survey OBC has awarded Sashikumar a second grant of £500 to carry on his work. These are patches of climax forest set aside several centuries ago when the original vegetation was cleared. They are considered abodes of the gods and held in great reverence by the local community. Since the 1960s the situation has changed and many groves have been destroyed or are threatened. The aims of the project are to create awareness amongst the local people and government agencies about the importance of conserving sacred groves. The population, movements and breeding of birds of the groves will be studied. The intensive study of the grove Chirayil Kavu, begun during the previous survey, will be continued and three additional groves will be monitored regularly.

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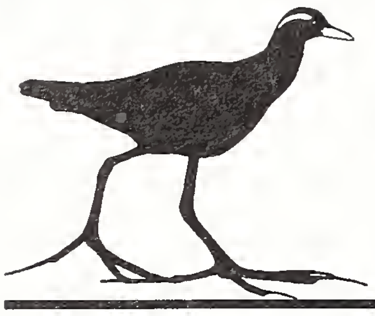

Around the Orient

Compiled by Colin Poole

CHINA

New Information on Chestnut-throated Partridge in Tibet

Little is known about the status of the Chestnut-throated Partridge *Tetraophasis obscurus*, endemic to western China and Tibet, but recent Chinese reports have thrown some new light on the species. Liu and Ciren of the University of Tibet cite a Tibet Forestry Bureau survey that puts its population in eastern Tibet at about 40,000 individuals, although Yin and Liu estimate the population somewhat lower, at 25,000 individuals.

Liu and Ciren say the Chestnut-throated Partridge is distributed over an area of 300,000km^2 of eastern Tibet, where it is found at elevations of 3,200 to 4,500m (2,800 to 4,500m, according to Yin and Liu). It is found in mixed coniferous broad-leaved forest at 3,200 to 3,700m, coniferous forest at 3,300 to 3,900m, sparse shrub at 3,700 to 4,000m and grassland and rocky terrain at 3,900 to 4,500m. In a survey of three locations, Liu and Ciren reported sightings of between one bird per 0.23ha to one per 9ha, with the birds most common in bushes/scrub and least common in dense forest. They also say it is most common on fairly bare slopes and gullies between 3,300 and 3,800m. Zhao cites Lu Taichun and Lu Chunlei as saying that at Baoxing in Sichuan the Chestnut-throated Partridge is found at a density of 3.5 to 4.0 per ha.

Chestnut-throated Partridge Tetraophasis obscurus *by Dave Showler*

Liu and Ciren say the Chestnut-throated Partridge is protected under various local Tibetan regulations and also by religious taboos. For example a flock of about 80 birds at the Ningguo temple at Markam is fed by the monks. Hence the birds are quite tame there and come into the temple. Yin and Liu say the species is under threat from habitat destruction, but give no details. Natural enemies, according to Liu and Ciren, include Saker Falcon *Falco cherrug*, Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*, Lammergeier *Gypaetus barbatus*, Black Kite *Milvus migrans* and White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla* as well as Red Fox *Vulpes vulpes*, Weasel *Mustela kathiah* and Asian Black Bear *Selenarctos thibetanus*.

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Contributed by Michael Rank

HONG KONG

More Development for Mai Po
Following its earlier dismissal in the Hong Kong High Court of Appeal, in December 1996 the Privy Council in London ruled in favour of Henderson Land and their Sunnyville golf-course development in the Mai Po buffer zone (*Bull. OBC* 23: 12). Now at least five other developers who deferred planning applications pending the judgement are queuing up for their cases to be heard, further threatening the integrity of the Mai Po buffer zone.

INDIA

Largest Greater Adjutant Nesting Site in Assam under Threat
The largest of the five known nesting sites of the globally threatened Greater Adjutant *Leptoptilus dubius* in Assam is at Naogaon. This extraordinary site consists of a 1ha grove of huge trees situated in the suburbs of the town. In 1996, 24 nesting pairs of Greater Adjutants occupied the grove. The site has been zealously protected for a number of years by a local NGO called The Green Guard Nature Organisation, which is led by Hillu Jyoti Singha, who observes the nesting storks from a precarious 28m high bamboo platform. However, the grove is owned freehold by one individual who now intends to clear the land for a housing development. He recently cut down two enormous trees, which although they did not have active stork nests in them, had been used as nest sites in the previous year. Local NGOs are requesting international assistance in a campaign to try and buy the site.

More National Parks and Sanctuaries Planned
In inaugurating the first Pan-Asian Ornithological Congress and 13th BirdLife Asia Conference in Coimbatore in November 1996, the Union Minister of State for Environment and Forests, Capt. Jai Narain Prasad announced the intention of the Union Environment Ministry to extend India's protected area network. It is planned to add to the existing 75 national parks, 421 wildlife sanctuaries and eight biosphere reserves, a further 73 national parks and 79 wildlife sanctuaries and an unspecified number of additional biosphere reserves.

All Assam Wild Bird Preservation Campaign four years old
In 1992, Nature's Beckon, an environmental activist group founded in 1982 in Dhubri District, Assam, north-east India, initiated the All Assam Wild Bird Preservation Campaign in an attempt to reduce wide scale hunting in the state. With the campaign now in its second phase Nature's Beckon has established units in every district and important town and village in Assam and through this network has held public meetings, exhibitions, distributed leaflets and posters translated into local languages and held training workshops in local wildlife sanctuaries. Four years on this campaign has met with considerable success, not only helping to increase awareness of the hunting problem and reduce hunting pressure in Assam, but has also lead to the designation by the State Government of Chakrashila Wildlife Sanctuary.

Indian Eco-projects to get US$48 million
Seven protected areas covered under the Indian Eco-projects Project will receive a total of US$48 million to conserve the country's biodiversity. Nearly US$28 million will come as credit from the International Development Association and another US$20 million as a grant from the Global Environment Facility. Of the seven areas that will be covered, five are tiger reserves located in Bihar, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and West Bengal. The remaining two are Nagarhole National Park, Karnataka and Gir National Park, Gujarat. The World Bank claims that the project aims to slow, halt and possibly even reverse the decline in the richness, complexity and regeneration of the ecosystems and species in these sites, and that nearly half a million indigenous tribal, scheduled caste and fringe villagers will benefit.

Siberian Cranes Arrive in Bharatpur
Three adult Siberian Cranes *Grus leucogeranus* arrived in Keoladeo National Park early on the morning of the 16th of November. They were first sighted by a researcher from the Bombay Natural History Society and one of the guides. The three birds were resting

peacefully after their arduous migration from Siberia. During the journey of several thousand kilometres the cranes are believed to pass through six countries-Russia, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India. There is jubilation that the Siberian crane have arrived in the month of November, as they used to do years ago. It may be noted that last winter the Siberian Crane (three adults and a chick) did not arrive at Keoladeo until 1st February 1996. They departed on 4th March. In 1993, five birds arrived on 13th January. None of the Siberian Cranes that arrived in November were marked with a leg band which indicates that they might be joined by more birds from the Kunovat basin in Siberia. During the last two years two young birds have been banded by Russian Scientists, one of which was among the four Siberian Cranes that visited Bharatpur last year. The birds arrived a few days after the conclusion of the Siberian Crane Range State Meeting that was held in Bharatpur from 4th to 7th November. The meeting was attended by delegates from the Russian Federation, Kazakistan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan, USA, Japan, Germany, The Netherlands and India, in a united bid to save the Siberian Crane, one of the most endangered birds in the world. Indian NGOs were represented at the meeting by The Wildlife Institute of India, the Wildlife Protection Society of India, the Bombay Natural History Society and the Oriental Bird Club.

First WPSI Bird Conservation Award Announced

The first Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI) Annual Award for Bird Conservation, sponsored by the Edgeworth India Trust was presented on 20 November 1996 to Mr Sohan Lal, a guide at the Keoladeo National Park in Bharatpur. Sohan started off as a daily wage guide trainee about 27 years ago in Bharatpur. His enthusiasm for birding brought him under the watchful eye of Bharatpur's birding legend, Hukum Singh. Sohan was soon accompanying Salim Ali on his many visits to Bharatpur. Today Sohan is a veteran bird guide and forest guard and devoted to the welfare of the park. His nomination for the award was by the Chief Wildlife Warden of the government of Rajasthan. One of the panel of judges has known him for over 25 years. The award was presented by Bikram Grewal on behalf of WPSI. For further information on nominating people for this award see *Stray Feathers* p. 54.

Bombay's National Park under Threat

At 100km^2, the Sanjiv Gandhi National Park in Bombay claims to be the largest wildlife sanctuary inside any metropolitan region in the world. The park supports 150 species of butterfly, 31 species of reptile and several mammals including 40 Leopards *Panthera pardus*. However, it is now hemmed in on three sides by the urban sprawl of Bombay and two satellite towns, and 200,000 slum dwellers have invaded the park boundaries. If the slums continue to grow at their present rate it is estimated that the park will disappear within ten years. Park staff and police are fighting back, tearing down huts and bulldozing slums every few months, but the people soon return. The one animal to gain from this however is the Leopard, their population is apparently increasing, due to large numbers of chickens and goats brought by the slum dwellers.

INDONESIA

Javan Hawk Eagle population estimate increased

Extensive fieldwork over the past few years coordinated by BirdLife Indonesia Programme, including amongst others a part OBC funded study, has resulted in a new increased population estimate for the globally threatened Javan Hawk Eagle *Spizaetus bartelsi*. From an original estimate of 50-60 pairs in 1986, the current population estimate is now 126-160 pairs. Although large scale forest loss in densely populated Java is undoubtedly a major factor affecting the species' occurence, it was reported to be found in nearly all suitable forest habitats, and the major threat now may be the capture of chicks for the bird trade.

BirdLife are currently setting up an action plan for the species' conservation which will include a public awareness campaign and regular monitoring and guarding of nests during the breeding season.

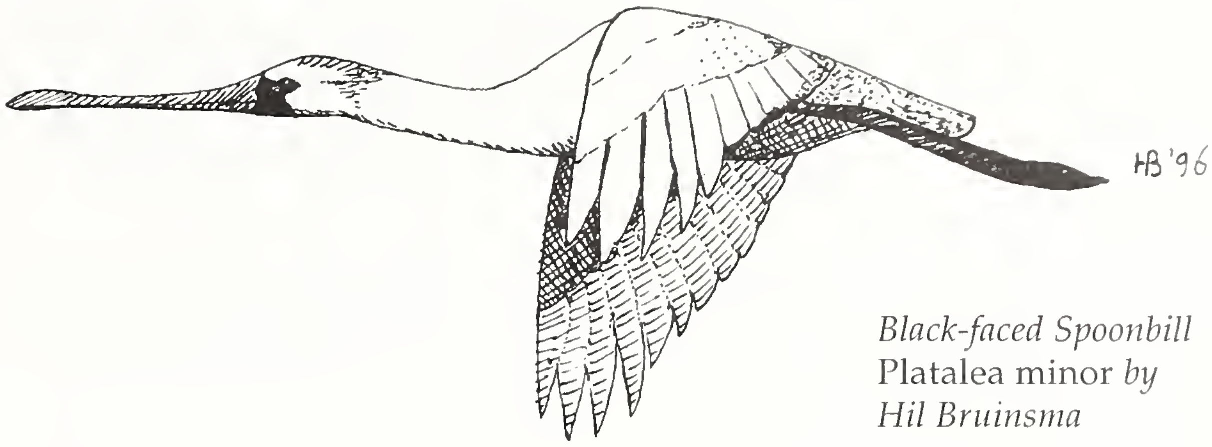
JAPAN

Black-faced Spoonbill News from Kyushu
In summer 1996 an apparently adult pair of Black-faced Spoonbills *Platalea minor*, took up residence in an egretry in Ishikawa Prefecture and even engaged in nest building. Also present for some days was a pair of Chinese Egret *Egretta eulophotes* - which actually nested in the area 10 years ago, but lost the eggs due to disturbance from construction work. Unfortunately, however, the site is under threat from road and park development. Better news recently is that winter 1996-97 saw record numbers of up to 30 Black-faced Spoonbills wintering in Kyushu.

Contributed by Nial Moores.

LAOS

Another Dam Loan
The Asian Development Bank has approved a US$52 million loan to Laos to build the proposed Nam Leuk hydroelectric dam. However, controversy exists over the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), the first of which was rejected by the Laos Government as 'inadequate, inaccurate and misleading', whilst the second has been carried out by the French engineering company Sogreah Ingénerie, who have also been commissioned to design and supervise the construction of the dam.



Black-faced Spoonbill Platalea minor *by Hil Bruinsma*

MALAYSIA

Protected Status Announced for Belum and other areas
The Chief Minister of Perak State, Tan Sri Ramli Ngah Taib, has announced that 290,000ha of the Belum forest will always be protected as a wildlife sanctuary, he pledged that no logging activities would be allowed and that wildlife "would not be touched and could flourish". The area's importance was first highlighted by the Malaysian Nature Society (MNS) (*Bull. OBC* 21 & 22), and this represents a major success for the MNS campaign, as they plan their second scientific expedition, this time to Temenggor and the northern part of the Belum forest.

At the same time several other States also announced extensions to their protected areas. These include Pahang who have designated an additional 2,000ha of Endau Rompin for wildlife conservation and announced the setting up of a joint committee with the Johor State Government to work on common strategies for promoting and maintaining the Endau Rompin reserve (*Bull. OBC* 21). The Selangor State Government has announced its intention to turn the 10,000ha forest reserve in Hulu Gombak into a wildlife reserve, to replace the one that was degazetted for development in Templer's Park. Whilst the Perlis State Government has given forest reserve status to the untouched area of Wang Mu on the Thai border, producing a contiguous protected area with the neighbouring Thai permanent forest reserves.

Bakun Dam Gets Go Ahead
On 17 February 1997, the Malaysian Court of Appeal ruled against a previous High Court judgement that had ruled against the Bakun Dam on the basis that the EIA was invalid (*Bull. OBC* 24: 18). The ruling, that the state rather than federal government has legislative jurisdiction over the land and therefore approval of the EIA, now allows the go ahead for the Bakun Dam project.

NEPAL

World's Tallest Dam to be Built
Just one year after Nepalese NGOs were celebrating their victory in the campaign against the Arun III dam (*Bull. OBC* 22: 18), the Nepalese Government has announced it has ratified a treaty with India to build the world's tallest dam.

The Pancheswar Dam will measure 315m and will be built on the Mahakali River, a tributary of the Ganges in western Nepal. Under the terms of the agreement, most of the 6,500 megawatts the dam will generate will be exported to India. Nepalese NGOs are already protesting that little information about the project is being made public and no environmental or social impact studies have apparently yet been conducted.

THAILAND

New threat to Khao Sam Roi Yot

A visit to Khao Sam Roi Yot National Park by Bird Conservation Society of Thailand (BCST) members in late October 1996 revealed that the coastal flats lying immediately between the national park headquarters and the beach are being parcelled up and sold off as real estate by a Thai company, Riviera Beach. If allowed to go ahead this development would mean the end of nationally important populations of Malaysian Plover *Charadrius peronii* and Little Tern *Sterna albifrons*. BCST and other NGOs are making strong representations to Government conservation agencies and the prominent public figures associated with Riviera Beach.

VIETNAM

Government of Vietnam gazettes Ke Go Nature Reserve

On 28th December 1996, Vice-premier Tran Duc Luong signed the declaration creating Ke Go Nature Reserve. This new 24,801ha nature reserve has been established to conserve the world's only known population of the endangered Vietnamese Pheasant *Lophura hatinhensis*. It is also the only known locality from which Imperial Pheasant *L. imperialis* has been collected in recent times. The creation of this reserve arises from a management plan written by the BirdLife Vietnam Programme and the Forest Inventory and Planning Institute as part of a BirdLife project funded by the European Union. The creation of this reserve represents a significant step towards the conservation of these endemic species. It also represents the first new protected area created since 1986 and it is the first time a conservation NGO has been associated with the creation of a new protected area.

Encroachment at important Vietnamese protected areas

A French fish-farming company has recently been granted a concession to develop 50ha of ponds inside Cat Tien National Park. The project will destroy an area of grassland which provides foraging and display areas for the globally threatened Green Peafowl *Pavo muticus*. It is feared that, once complete, the ponds may attract Lesser Adjutants *Leptoptilus javanicus* and Painted Storks *Mycteria leucocephala* from the park and lead to conflicts with the pond operators. The use of a range of chemicals in the fish-farming process poses an additional risk to the storks which could result in poisoning.

Despite an increased number of guard stations at Tram Chim Nature Reserve, human settlements now entirely surround this important protected area. People routinely graze thousands of domestic ducks and hundreds of domestic Water Buffaloes in the nature reserve and engage in illegal fishing causing disturbance to waterbirds.

Important Bird Area in Vietnam suffers destruction

Cam Ranh Bay provides an important staging and wintering area for shorebirds and threatened species such as Chinese Egret *Egretta eulophotes* and Spoon-billed Sandpiper *Calidris pygmeus* have been recorded. However, over the last three years there have been extensive shrimp pond developments extending over several hundred hectares of the inter-tidal area. Furthermore, many of the shrimp-pond bunds have been built using coral.

Contributed by Jonathan Eames

Sources

BBC Wildlife, Bikram Grewal, *Bird Conservation Society of Thailand Bulletin*, BirdLife International Indonesia Programme, BirdLife International Vietnam Programme, *The Guardian*, Natural History of Indian Sub-continent Internet Discussion Group, Soumayadeep Datta (Director, Nature's Beckon), *New Scientist*, *New Straits Times*, *The Star* (Kuala Lumpur), *World Rivers Review*.

Conservation on the Sangihe and Talaud Islands, Sulawesi, Indonesia

A team from the University of York and Universitas Sam Ratulangi spent 10 weeks in 1995 surveying these remote islands situated off the north-eastern tip of Sulawesi.

Background

The Sangihe and Talaud islands, Indonesia, form a chain which extends from near the tip of the Minahasa peninsula of northern Sulawesi towards the southern tip of Mindanao in the Philippines. The islands are the northernmost limit of Wallacea, and have a poor, impoverished avifauna, lacking many species found on Sulawesi. The Sangihe islands are volcanic and home to eight restricted-range species (defined as having a world range of <50,000km^2), of which three are endemic. North-east of Sangihe are the Talaud islands, low and non-volcanic. The avifauna of the islands is poor, yet four restricted-range species occur, one being endemic to the islands[1,2] .

In total ten restricted-range species occur, of which five are found only on the islands. Consequently the islands have been designated an Endemic Bird Area (EBA) by BirdLife International[3]. Six of these species are listed as being globally threatened with extinction, including all five endemic to the area[2].

The main threat to these species has been habitat destruction. On Sangihe, only isolated fragmentary patches of natural forest remain, whilst on Talaud the only large areas of forest are restricted to the remote central mountains of Karakelong. Where species have been able to adapt to habitat loss or habitat degradation other hazards threaten their survival; for instance Red-and-blue Lory *Eos histrio* populations are coming under pressure from trapping for the live bird trade.

Despite the conservation significance of the islands, little ornithological research has been undertaken on Sangihe and Talaud this century. Collectors documented the avifauna, mainly between 1860 and 1890, but it is thought that in the 1920s and 1930s widespread conversion of natural vegetation took place on Sangihe, creating the mixed plantation ecosystem that dominates the island today[4]. The effects of this change have never been investigated in detail, until the present project. Similarly, the Talaud islands have been ignored by ornithologists for many years, making the present project the first to survey comprehensively the EBA this century, although Rozendaal spent considerable time on the islands and collected many specimens, although none of his work has yet been published.

A joint project team from the University of York, England and Universitas Sam Ratulangi, Manado, Indonesia spent 10 weeks on the islands conducting survey work in primary forest, mixed plantation and secondary habitats. Information on the avifauna was gathered using Variable Circular Plot (VCP) techniques[5], mist netting, interviews with local people and general birdwatching. These data were complemented by recording habitat variables at over 150 sites, including tree species composition, canopy characteristics and physical factors.

Project Results

During fieldwork (August-October 1995) a total of 127 species was recorded by the expedition, including all five endemic species. On Sangihe only isolated patches of natural forest vegetation were found, with the majority of the island having been converted to mixed plantation agriculture. Whilst forest areas supported a higher species diversity, the majority of species were recorded utilising cultivated areas and appear to have adapted to this habitat. On Talaud more extensive areas of forest remain and cultivation is largely restricted to low-lying and coastal areas. On Karakelong a hunting reserve has been established and surveys were concentrated in this area, assisted by local PHPA (Directorate of Forest Protection and Nature Conservation) officers. The threatened, near-threatened and restricted-range species[2] recorded by the project are listed below with a brief summary of their status.

Threatened species

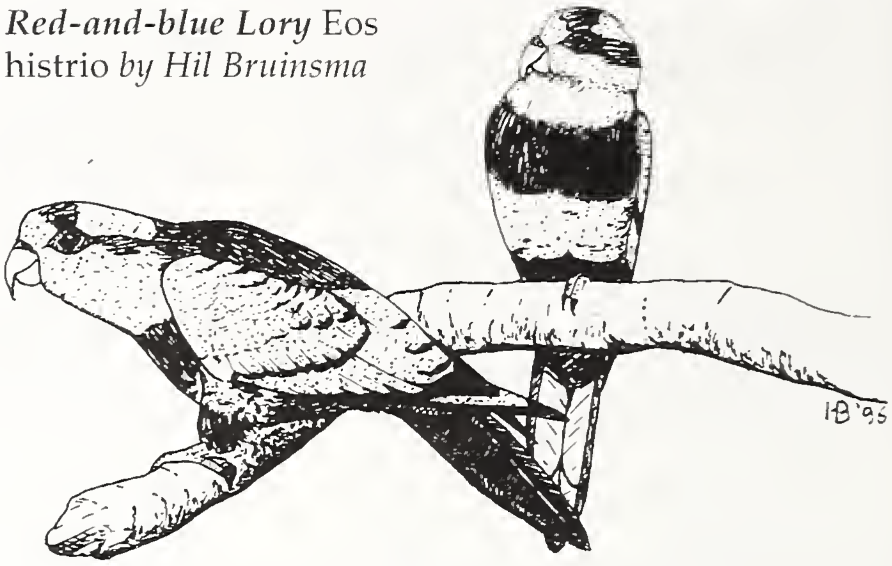
Red-and-blue Lory *Eos histrio*
An endemic species, there are three sub-species. *E. h. histrio* of the Sangihe islands was thought to be extinct[4] having not been seen in the wild since 1978[1]. A small population was rediscovered in northern Sangihe, utilising remnant forest and cultivated areas. *E. h. talautensis* of Talaud was known to occur in good numbers[6,7] but a recent proposal by Indonesia resulted in the species being placed on Appendix I of CITES. Red-and-blue Lory was found at all survey sites on Karakelong, being particularly common in the north of the island, with up to 250 birds seen daily. Numbers were lower on Salebabu and PHPA officers reported the species to be extinct on Kabaruang. The status of *E. h. challengeri* of the Nenusa and Miangas islands was unresolved[1,8].

Blue-naped Parrot *Tanygnathus lucionensis*
The Talaud islands are an important site for this species, which is becoming increasingly rare in the Philippines, its main range, due to habitat loss and trapping[2]. Blue-naped Parrot was recorded on Salebabu and Karakelong, where it was found to be regular in forested areas.

Sangihe Hanging Parrot *Loriculus catamene*
Endemic to Sangihe there were few recent sightings[9,10]. Sangihe Hanging Parrot was found to be present in all areas visited, including forest, coconut monoculture and mixed plantations, from sea level to an altitude of 900m.

Grey Imperial Pigeon *Ducula pickeringii*
A species known from lowland forest on small islands around the Celebes Sea, the few recent records are of small numbers[2]. Previously recorded from Salebabu and Kabaruang, Talaud, a single bird was seen in north Karakelong and a captive bird located in a village on the island.

Cerulean Paradise-flycatcher
Eutrichomyias rowleyi
Previously known from the type specimen collected in the 1870s and a single sighting in 1978 on Gunung Awu, north Sangihe[1] this species is endemic to the island and was feared extinct[4]. A single bird was seen in forest edge scrub at 240m on the lower slopes of Gunung Awu, the bird appearing to be darker blue than the sole specimen, with more extensive black on the lores and tail.


Red-and-blue Lory Eos histrio *by Hil Bruinsma*

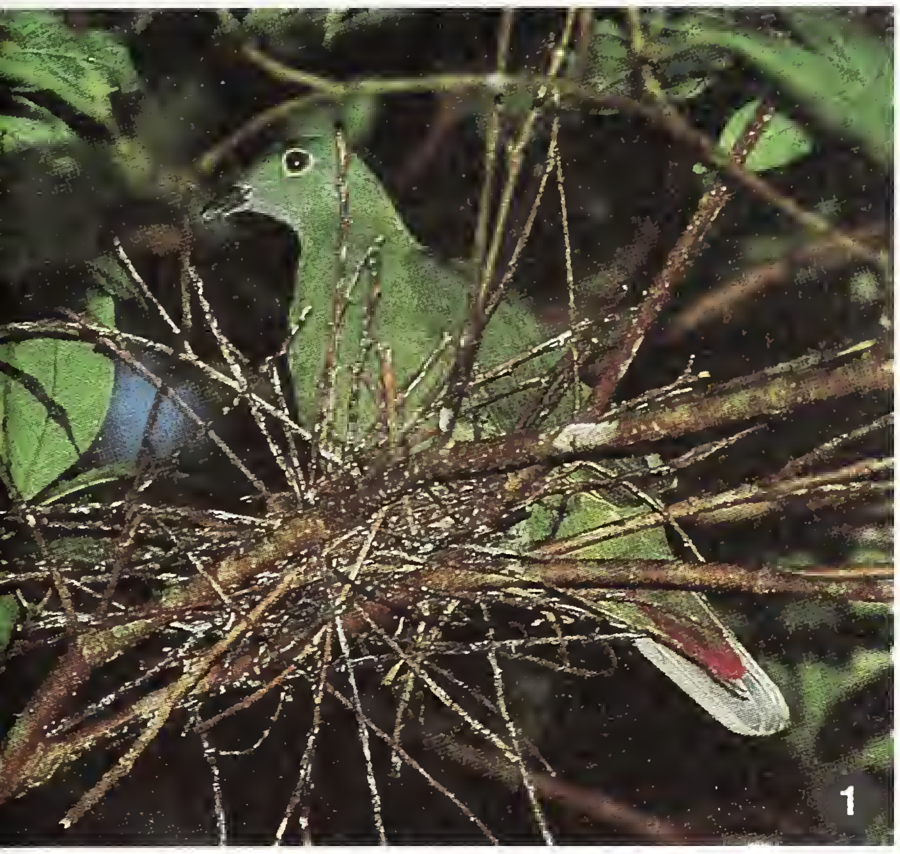
Elegant Sunbird *Aethopyga duyvenbodei*
Endemic to Sangihe (and possibly Siau, one record from 1865) the only published sighting of this species was a small group observed on Gunung Awu in 1986[1,9]. Elegant Sunbird was found to be regular at low densities in areas of mixed plantation with remnant patches of forest in close proximity from 75m to 900m. Usually observed singly or in pairs within mixed feeding flocks, associating in particular with other sunbird species and flowerpeckers, birds feed by gleaning insects from vegetation and spiders' webs. A probable juvenile bird was seen on 1st September, being identified as such by its pale pinky brown bill and legs and its open-faced expression.

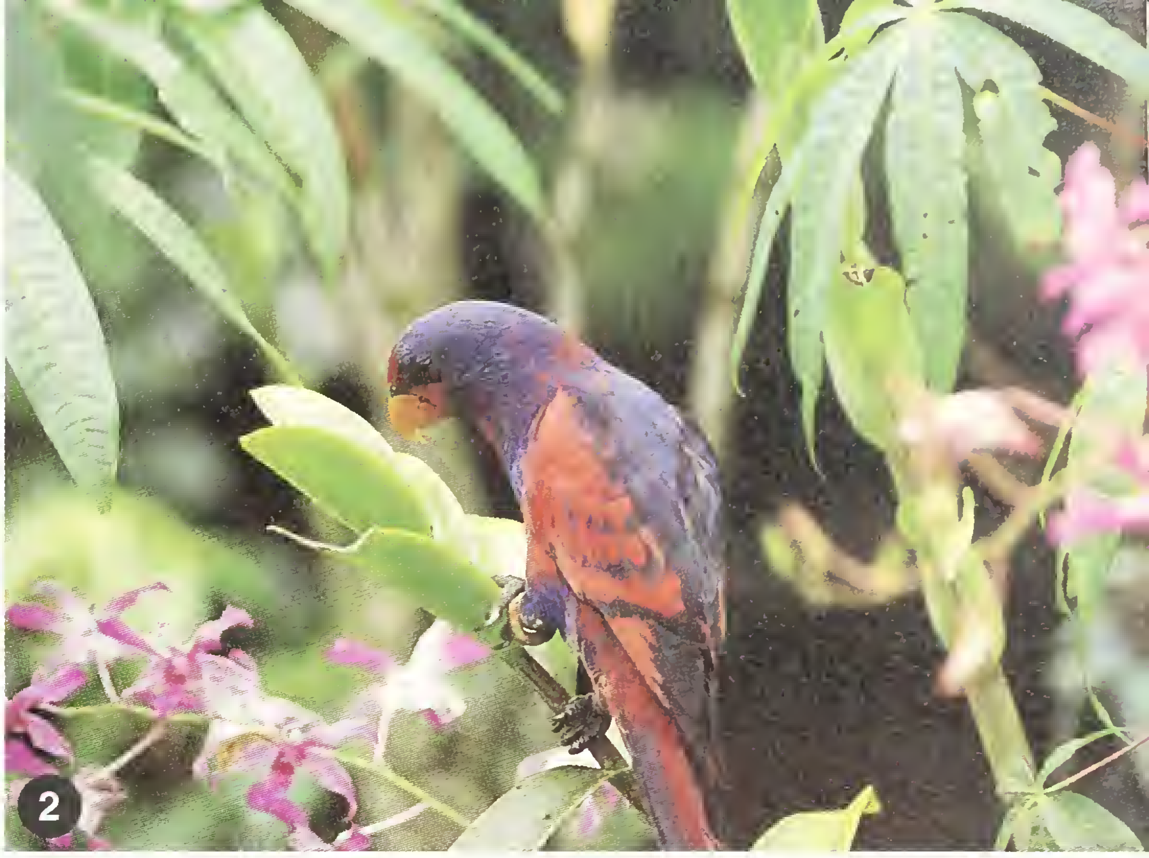
Near-threatened and restricted-range species

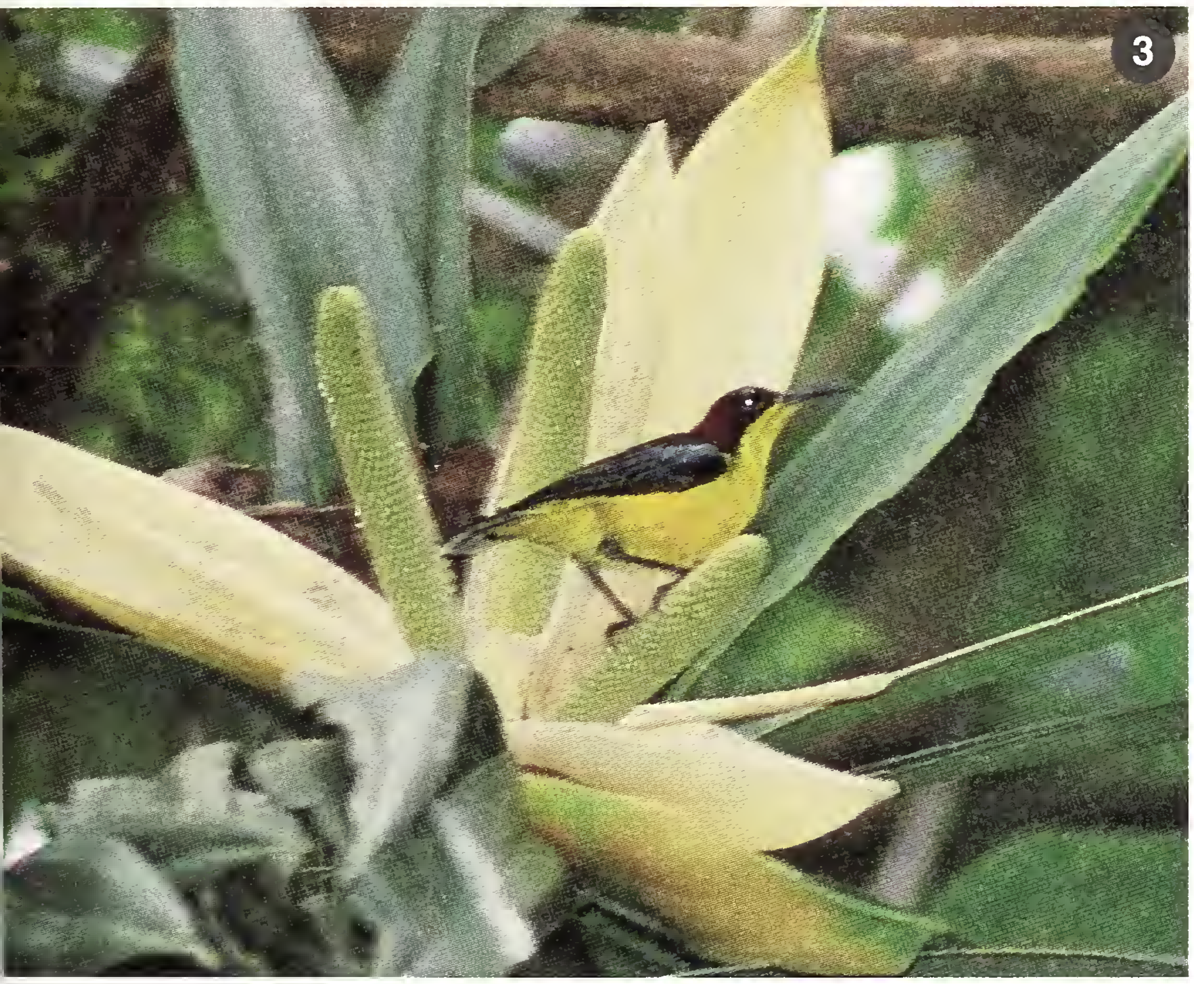
Philippine Scrubfowl *Megapodius cumingii*
Found on both island groups, although rare on Sangihe with birds recorded at a single site. On Talaud Philippine Scrubfowl is a common species in forest and cultivated areas, with a notable concentration of nest mounds on the Sara islands.

Lilac-marked Kingfisher *Cittura cyanotis*
Lilac-marked Kingfisher is widespread in low densities throughout Sangihe from 100m to 850m in remnant forest patches and mixed plantation agriculture. Lilac-cheeked Kingfishers were most commonly observed on feeding perches adjacent to recently cleared, open areas.

Collared [Talaud] Kingfisher
Todiramphus (chloris) enigma
Endemic to Talaud and regularly observed in forested areas on Karakelong and Salebabu. The taxonomic position of the two forms of *T. chloris* on Talaud was unclear, with the smaller form being treated as either a true species, *T. enigma*, or a sub-species *T. chloris enigma*[11,12]. The specific status of *enigma* is supported by both ecological and





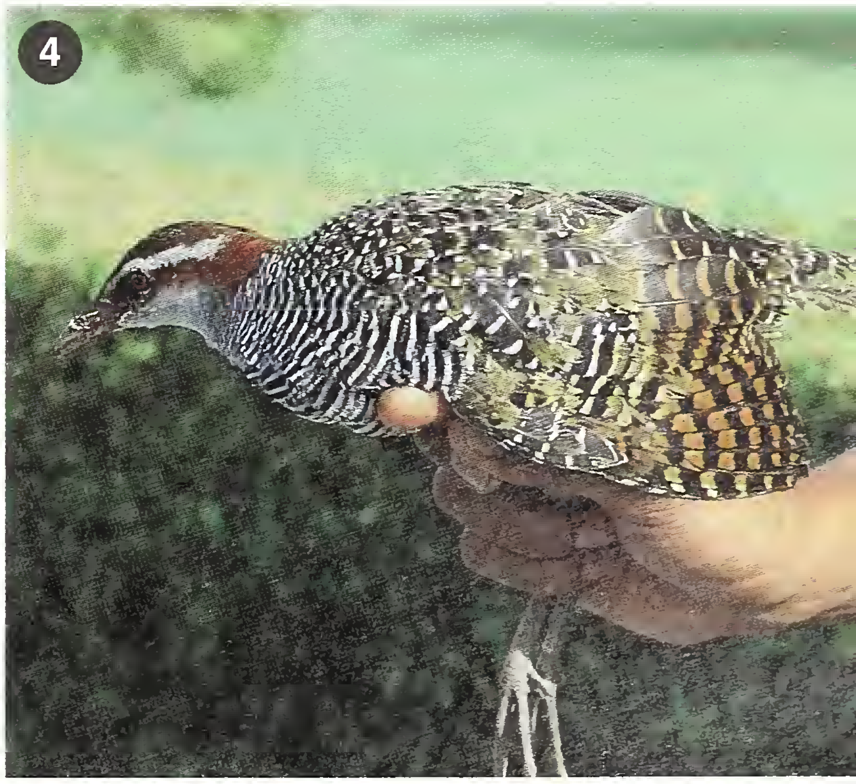


Birds of Sangihe and Talaud

1: Black-naped Fruit Dove *Ptilinopus melanospiza* (Photo: Frank Lambert).

2: Immature Red-and-blue Lory *Eos histrio* (Photo: Frank Lambert).

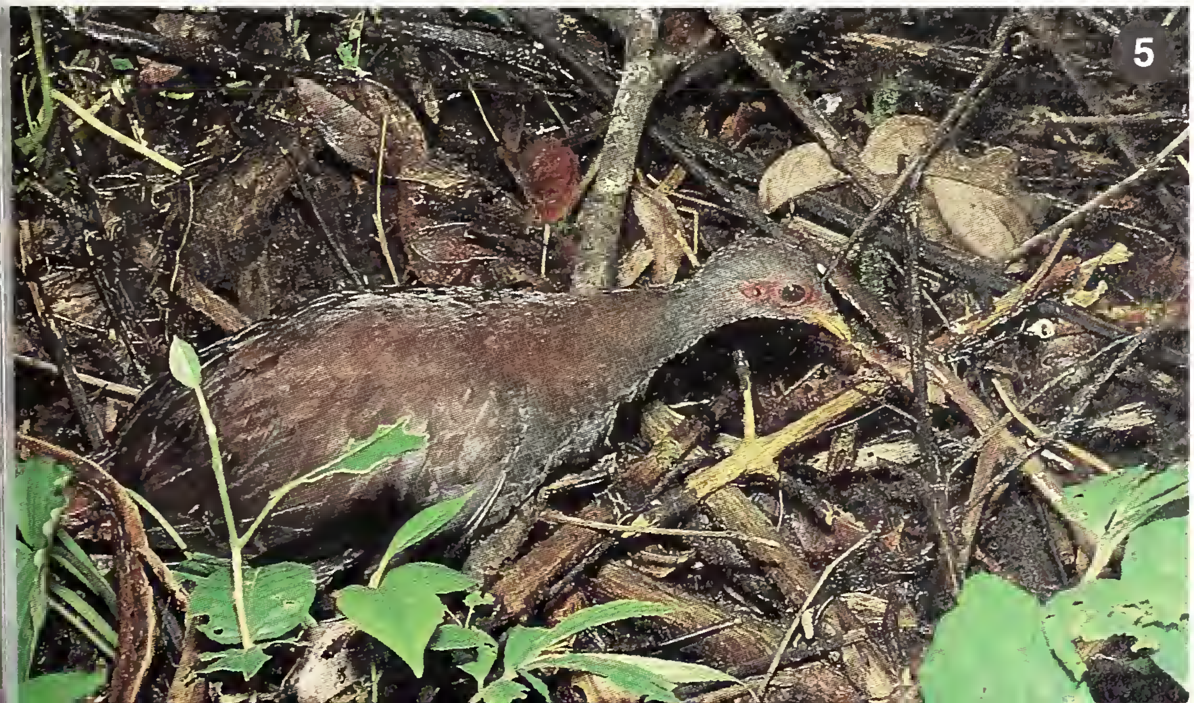
3: Male Elegant Sunbird *Aethopyga duyvenbodei* (Photo: Frank Lambert).



4: Buff-banded Rail *Gallirallus philippensis* (Photo: Frank Lambert).

5: Philippine Scrubfowl *Megapodius cumingii* (Photo: Frank Lambert).

6: Plain Bush Hen *Amaurornis olivaceus* (Photo: Frank Lambert).



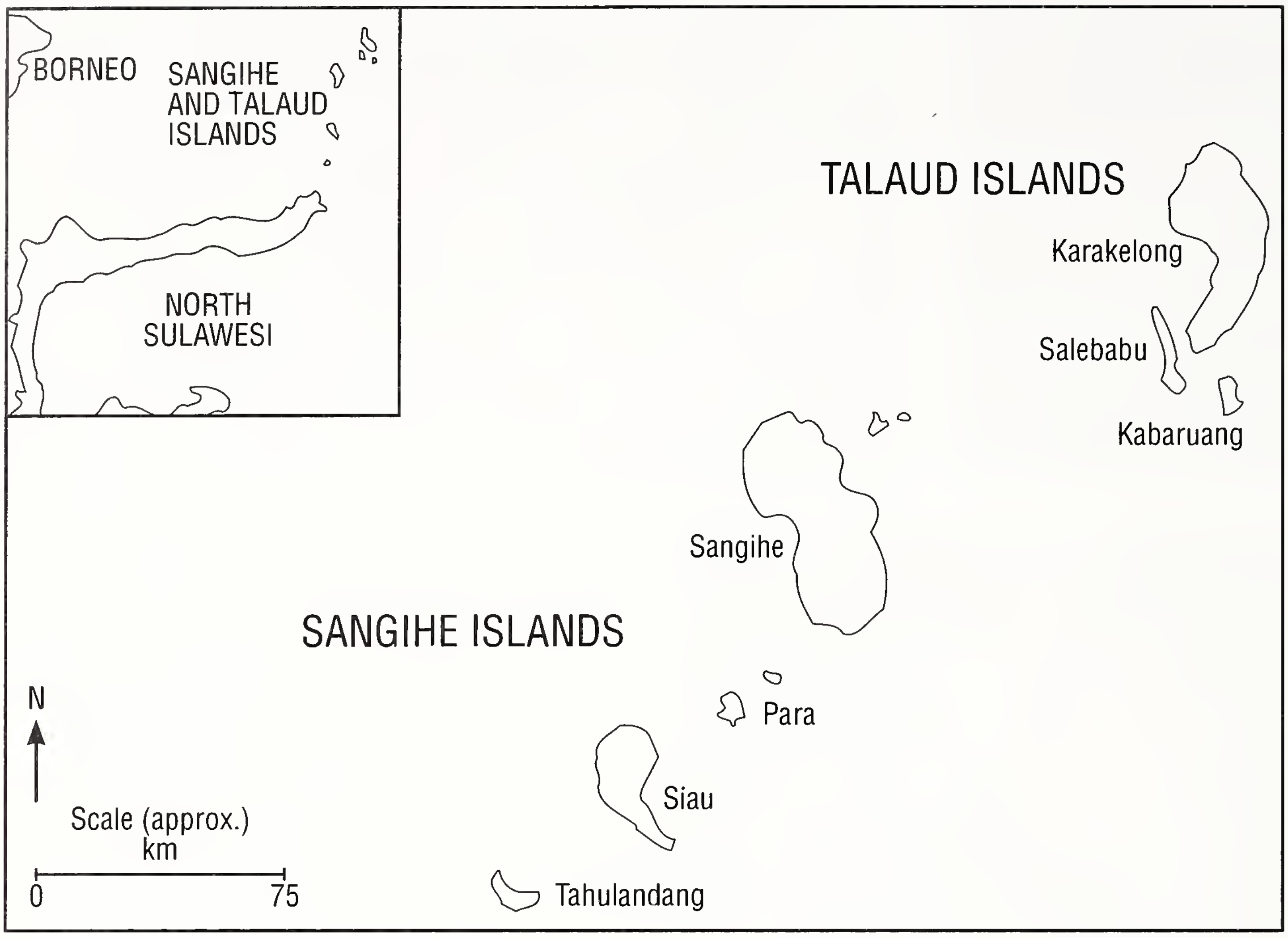


Figure 1: Map of the Sangihe and Talaud Islands

morphological differences from *chloris*. Ecological separation of the species occurs, with *enigma* being restricted to forest whilst *chloris* is found in secondary and coastal habitat; both species are reputed to have resident breeding populations on the islands and such sympatric distribution provides the strongest evidence for speciation[1]. This form is most easily identified in the field by its smaller size and less heavy bill compared to *chloris* and by call, a repetitive *'kekee..kekee..kekee.. kekee..kekee'*, that is always repeated five times followed by a brief pause followed by five more notes. On Talaud, *chloris* usually gives a characteristic double note *'ben-Ka'* call.

Blue-tailed Imperial Pigeon *Ducula concinna*
On Sangihe, regular in forest and mixed plantation habitat between 200m and 800m, the majority of records of this species were made in remnant forest patches, suggesting it is reliant on this habitat. Common in forest on Karakelong up to an altitude of 300m, but not recorded on Salebabu and local villagers on this island reported a decline in numbers associated with habitat loss and hunting.

Eastern Curlew *Numenius madagascariensis*
A passage migrant that was recorded on two dates on Talaud, the first records for the islands.

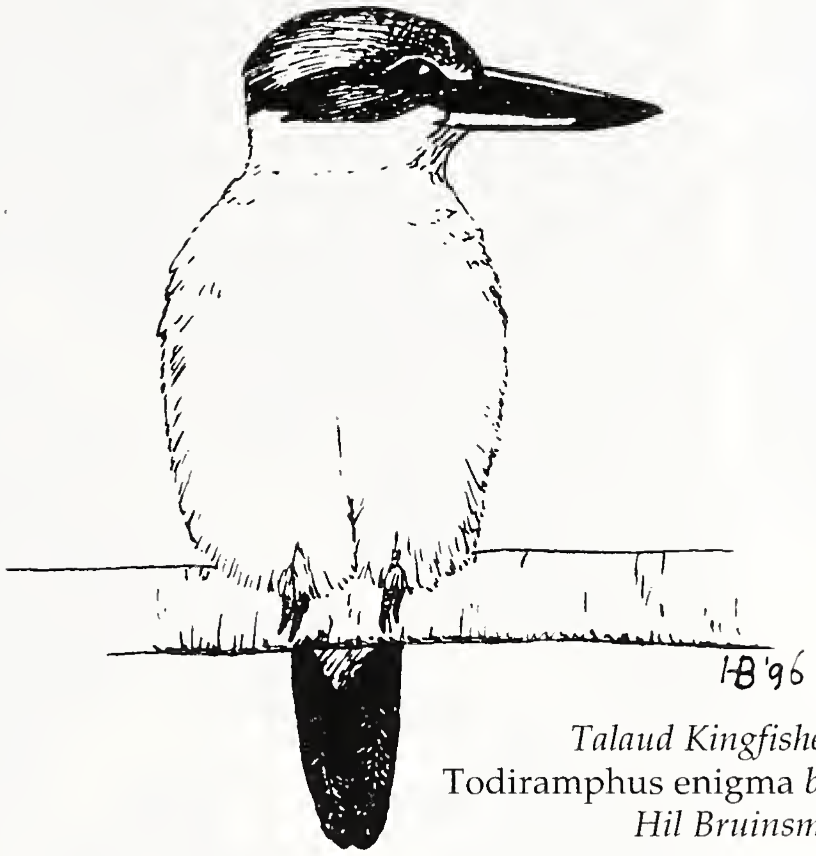
Von Schrenck's Bittern *Ixobrychus eurhythmus*
A single record on Salebabu of this species, a winter visitor to the islands.

Pied Cuckooshrike *Coracina bicolor*
A single bird seen in secondary scrub at 700m on Gunung Sahengbalira, Sangihe is the second record for the island, the first being collected in 1864[1].

Conservation Proposals
Knowledge of the ornithological status of the Talaud and Sangihe endemic bird area has been greatly increased as a result of the project. On Sangihe all endemic species were observed and it is clear that these species are more resilient to habitat alteration than was previously thought. Larger areas of forest remain on Talaud, especially Karakelong, and these form important refuges for a number of threatened species. Pressure from habitat loss is less and the main threat to species at present is trapping of wild birds for trade, in particular Red-and-blue Lory despite its protected status[13].

The situation on the islands is not without hope and, based on the 1995 survey results, further research, including an education/awareness programme is planned for 1997. Further information on the 1995 project results and the 1996 project is available from the author.

The project would like to thank the sponsors of the expedition, namely the University of York, Universitas Sam Ratulangi and the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI). Financial support for the project was provided by the Oriental Bird Club, British Ornithologists' Union, Royal



Talaud Kingfisher
Todiramphus enigma *by*
Hil Bruinsma

Insurance plc. and PT Asuransi Royal Indrapura, TSP Ltd (Manchester), The Parrot Society, International Loriinae Society, Lori Journaal Internationaal & subscribers and the University of York. We gratefully acknowledge the assistance provided by BirdLife International (Cambridge & Bogor), PHPA (Jakarta, Manado & Karakelong), Herman Teguh (WWF-Indonesia), Wallacean Development Institute, Indonesian Ornithological Society and Trevor Buckell.

Jon Riley, 18 Moseley Road, Cheadle Hulme, Cheadle, Cheshire, England

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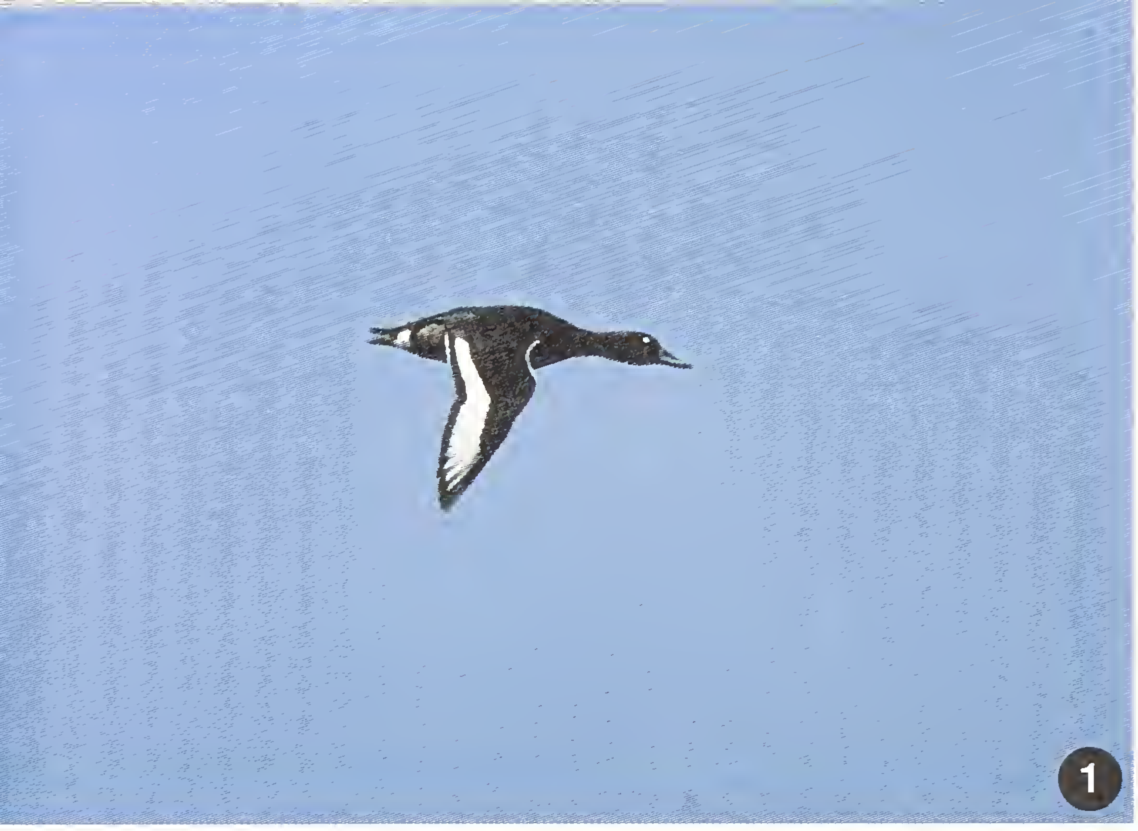
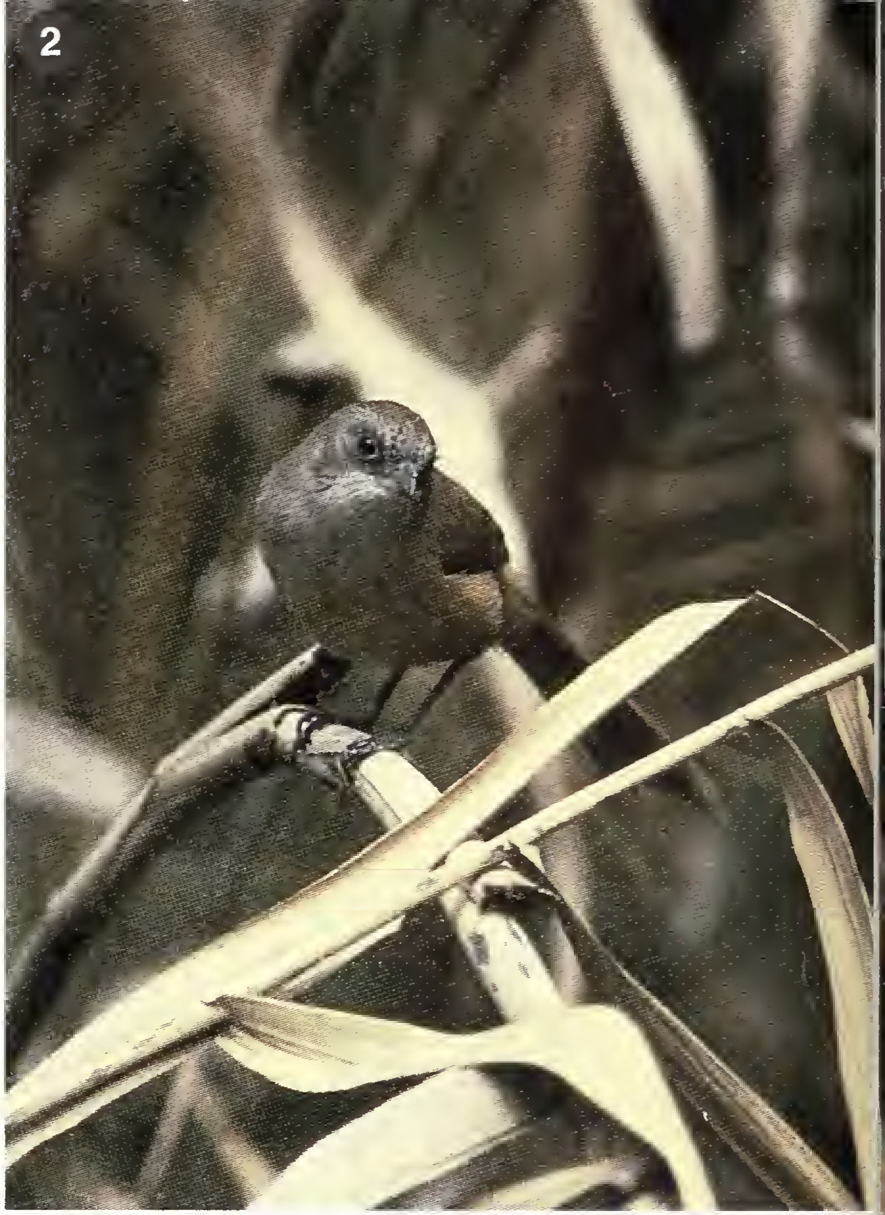
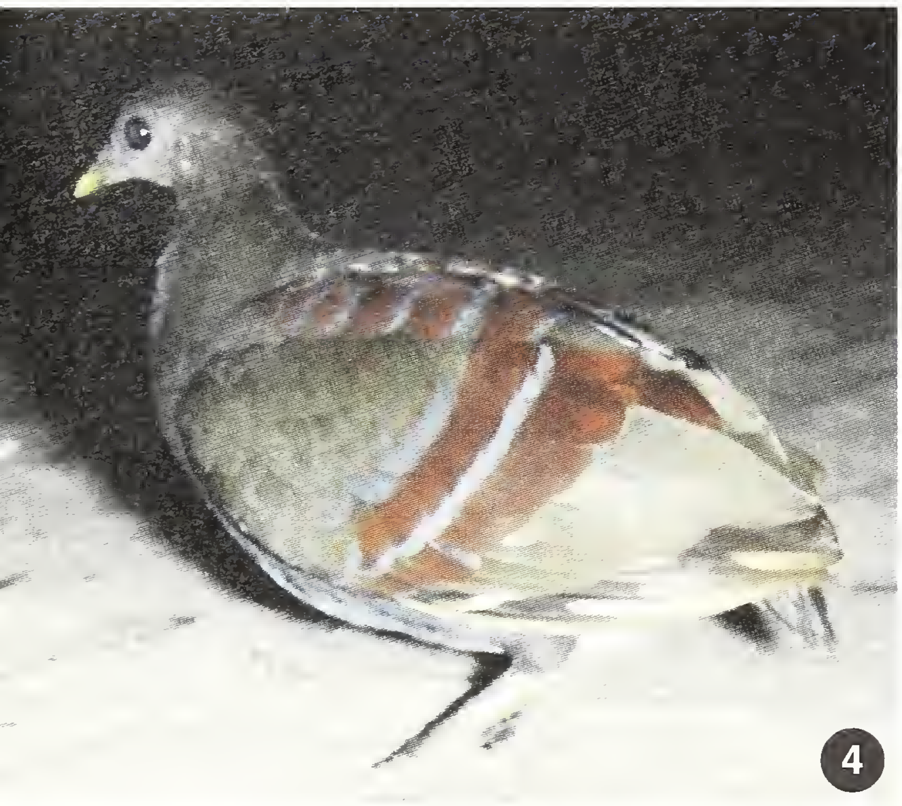
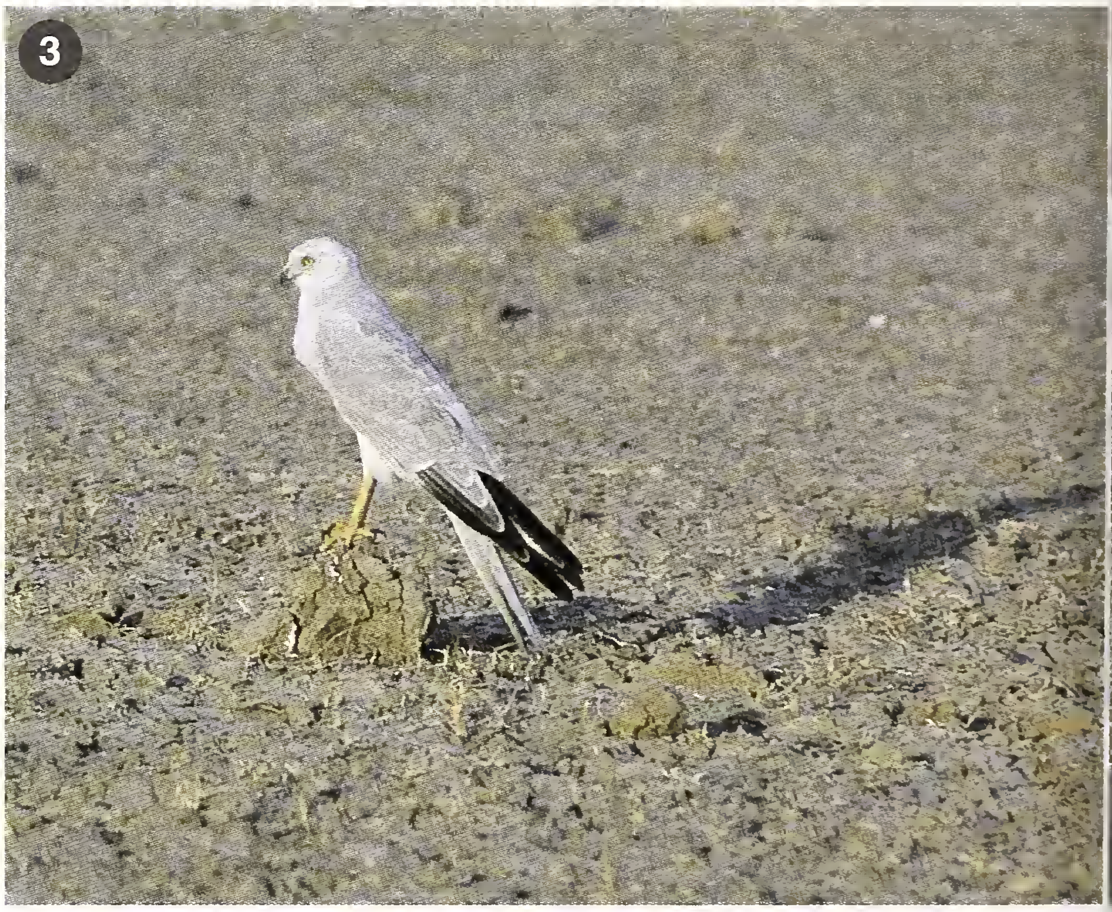
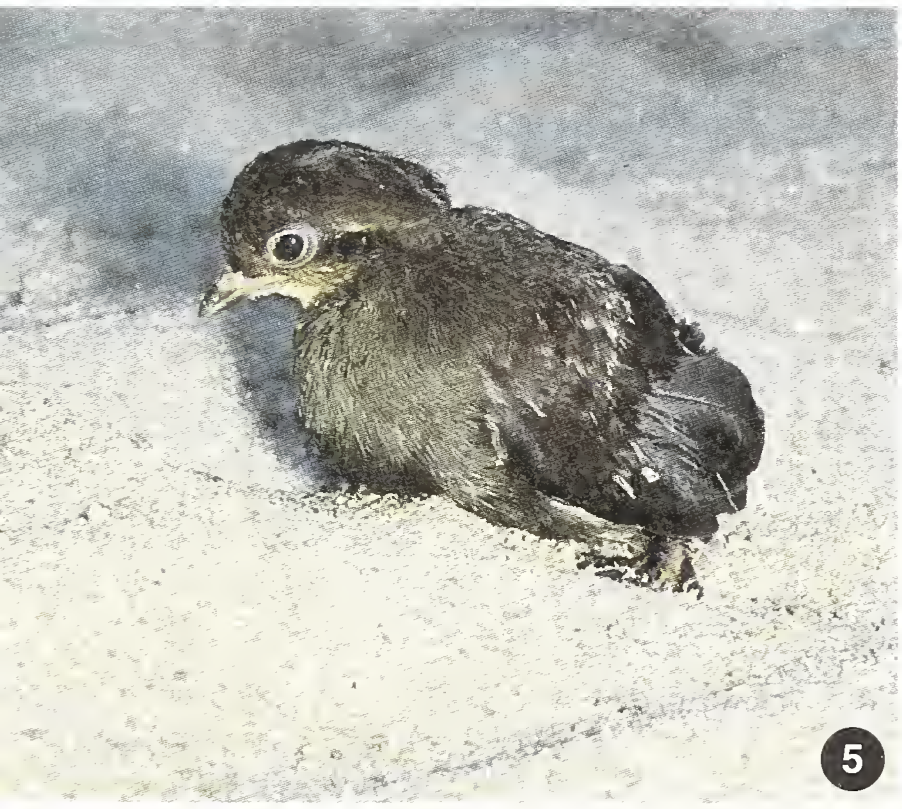










Birds of Dera Ismail Khan
1: Ferruginous Pochard *Aythya nyroca* (Photo: BirdLife Austria/ Peter Buchner).

2: Jerdon's Babbler *Ptilinopus melanospiza* (Photo: Nigel Bean).

3: Pallid Harrier *Aethopyga duyvenbodei* (Photo: Roger Clarke).

Moluccan Scrubfowl *Eulipoa wallacei* (p.50)
4: Adult (Photo: C. J. Heij and P. Rehatta).

5: Chick (Photo: C. J. Heij and P. Rehatta).

Dibru-Saikhowa (p.27)
6: Marsh at Dibru-Saikhowa with Asian Openbill Storks *Anastomus oscitans* (Photo: Anwaruddin Choudhury).

Sunbird *Production of this colour plate has been sponsored by Sunbird*

Birdwatching areas

District Dera Ismail Khan, Pakistan

Although relatively little visited compared to other areas in Asia, Pakistan is fast being recognised as an exciting country in which to go birding, with every chance of making outstanding ornithological discoveries.

Pakistan is not a famous destination for birdwatchers from abroad. Those few who come here mostly visit the same sites which have achieved an international reputation.

After having lived in Dera Ismail Khan (DIK) for eight years, I am now introducing three sites which I have found interesting. There are others too, but unfortunately they are situated in areas where kidnapping and robbery is practised and thus should not be visited by birdwatchers without special arrangements.

Timing is a crucial factor for what you may see. For observing as many species as possible the best time is undoubtedly the latter half of March. Summer is very hot and dull, but it is the season for studying breeding birds. Visible migration is best from the end of August to the first half of September, but by no means good enough for a special visit as better migration can be seen elsewhere. During the fall, more and more winter visitors drop in, the end of October being the most rewarding time.

Chasma

A huge wetland of international importance, Chasma is the queen of birdwatching areas in DIK. It is man-made, created 20 years ago when an 8km-long barrage for irrigation purposes was built across the Indus River. Officially the area is a wildlife sanctuary of 33,000ha. In practice many kinds of human activities from cutting reeds to extensive fishing go on there.

Reaching Chasma by public transport is easy from DIK (1.5-2 hrs) as well as from Mianwali on the Punjab side (*ca.* 45 mins). In the afternoon, with the sun behind you, there is a superb view of the westernmost stretch of open water from the hillside next to the police and customs checkpost.

Although it is easy to arrive by public transport in the area, it makes fully covering the site difficult. With a hired pick-up or car, however, it is easy to reach both shores and any of the spurs. On the easternmost spur there is a fisherman's settlement where you can hire a man to take you into the reeds by motorboat. Some of their engines do not have silencers, so check this beforehand. At times the water level is too low for boats to get through the channels in the reeds.

Black Stork Ciconia nigra *by Gokula*

Chasma is a good place for many kinds of wetland species. Cormorants, egrets, herons, **Black Storks** *Ciconia nigra*, waterfowl, birds of prey, waders, gulls and terns are well represented, depending on the season.

There are reports of almost 200,000 wintering waterfowl, although my biggest count is only 36,000. **Red-crested Pochard** *Rhodonessa rufina* is a common winter visitor and **Cotton Pygmy-goose** *Nettapus coromandelianus* is regular but rare.

Ten globally threatened or near-threatened species are regularly seen: **Ferruginous Pochard** *Aythya nyroca*, **White-tailed Eagle** *Haliaeetus albicilla*, **Pallas's Fish Eagle** *Haliaeetus leucoryphus* and **Greater Spotted Eagle** *Aquila clanga* are winter visitors; resident breeders are **Black-bellied Tern** *Sterna acuticauda*, **Jerdon's Babbler** *Chrysomma altirostre* and **Rufous-vented Prinia** *Prinia burnesii*; **White-rumped Vulture** *Gyps bengalensis* is a common year-round visitor which

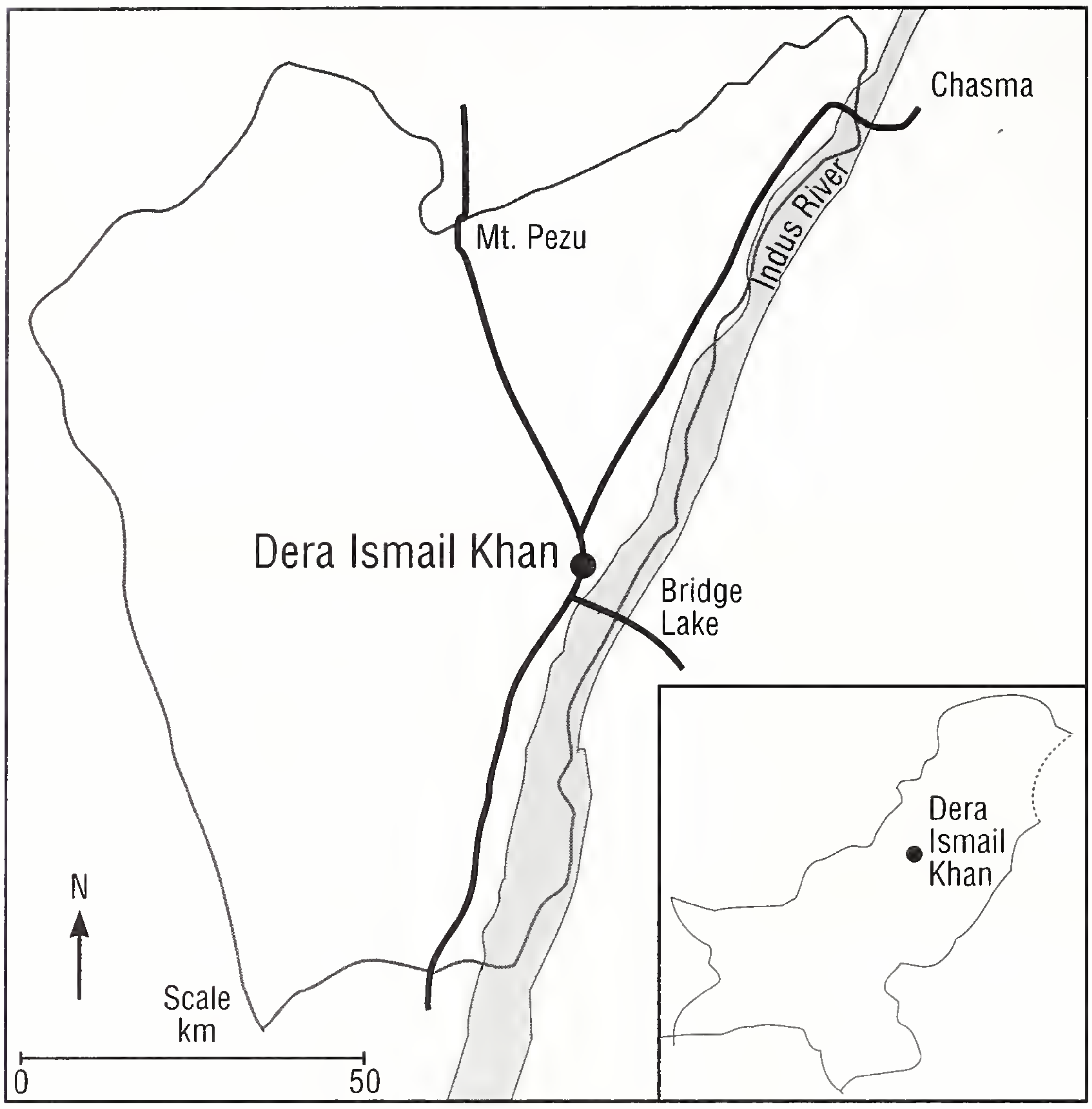


Figure 1: Map showing location of Dera Ismail Khan and places mentioned in the text.

breeds nearby; **Pallid Harrier** *Circus macrourus* occurs on migration; and **Indian Skimmer** *Rynchops albicollis* occurs in the summer months.

Bridge Lake

Bridge lake is another artificial wetland about 10km from DIK on the road to Punjab. The area consists of a shallow lake, pools, mudflats, sandy stretches and agricultural land. Its nature varies greatly with changes in the water level of the Indus. In summer it is mostly submerged, while in winter at times even the lake is partly dry. Two years ago flooding of the river unfortunately washed away a huge stretch of sandbanks, causing quicker drying-up after high water.

The area is easily approachable by public transport. Any vehicle from DIK towards Punjab will pass the lake. You have only to get off at any place which seems interesting.

The avifauna is similar to Chasma but numbers of birds are lower. Due to the shallow pools and mudflats many waders are present, with up to 19 species being recorded in one day. **Lesser Whistling-duck** *Dendrocygna javanica* breeds here. In May 1996 an egretry of at least 320 nests appeared in a tree grove on the main bund. Amongst **Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis* there are also **Little Egrets** *Egretta garzetta* and **Little Cormorants** *Phalacrocorax niger*.

Pezu

Pezu is a 1,376m high limestone mountain rising 1,000m above the surrounding plains. It is mostly barren but has a good cover of deciduous scrub forest on its higher slopes.

The DIK-Bannu road passes the mountain. The eastern side nearest the ravine is easily reached from the road by foot. After a small village hardly visible form the road turn left, up a lateral stony delta and enter the ravine.

On the western side a huge cement factory is being built on a similar delta. It seems to block access to the beginning of the best path leading to the peak and surely will destroy the beautiful scenery, not to mention the disturbance it will cause.

Several pairs of **Hume's Wheatear** *Oenanthe alboniger* inhabit the ravines around the mountain. **See-see Partridge** *Ammoperdix griseogularis* and **Grey Francolins** *Francolinus pondicerianus* can still be seen, though they have become rarer because of hunting. One resident pair of **Bonelli's Eagle** *Hieraaetus fasciatus* is easily sighted soaring above the slopes. In March, right after sunset, the monotonous call of the **Pallid Scops Owl** *Otus brucei* can be heard. Forests of the higher slopes still await someone to reveal the secrets of their bird life.

Juha Kylanpaa, Mission Bungalow, Dera Ismail Khan, Pakistan.

The Status of the Birds of Dibru-Saikhowa Sanctuary, Assam, India

Dibru-Saikhowa Wildlife Sanctuary lies in eastern Assam, falling partly in the districts of Tinsukia and Dibrugarh. It is about 500km by road from Guwahati, the capital city of Assam. It was established as a sanctuary in 1986 to preserve the White-winged Duck and the Salix swamp forest. The original area of the sanctuary was 640km^2, however, at the time of final notification in 1995 it was reduced to 340km^2. In the process the entire riverine stretches of the Brahmaputra and the Lohit rivers were excluded.

Dibru-Saikhowa is on the flat floodplains of the Brahmaputra, Lohit and Dibru rivers. The original vegetation was of tropical rainforest but during the great earthquake of 1950, a large part of the area sank by a few metres resulting in a succession of vegetation; deciduous forest with Salix swamps now dominates the forest. Bher *Salix tetrasperma*, Urium *Bischofia javanica*, Ou *Dillenia indica* and Hollock *Terminalia myriocarpa* are the major tree species. A few Hollong *Dipterocarpus macrocarpus* still survive in patches of rainforest.

Grasslands, reedbeds and wetlands (beels or ox-bow lakes and depressions, marshes, and sluggish channels) are the other major habitat types.

Few ornithologists have visited Dibru-Saikhowa. The earlier references to the area were all about the records of the White-winged Duck[2,4-6]. The first detailed bird survey in the area was conducted from 1992-1994[3]. During this survey I observed about 250 species within the sanctuary as well as in adjacent areas. Subsequent observations revealed the presence of more species. The total bird species recorded so far comes to 313 with, no doubt, more to be added in the future. Some rare and endangered species are listed in Table 1 with their seasonal status. As many as 85 species are winter visitors, some from far away places such as Siberia, while some are from the nearby Himalaya and Mishmi Hills (altitudinal migrants).

The sighting of Black-breasted Parrotbill *Paradoxornis flavirostris* during the survey was significant as there are hardly any recent records from anywhere in its range. The survey also extended the range of the Eurasian Griffon *Gyps fulvus* and the Bank Myna *Acridotheres ginginianus*. Another notable record was that of a pair of Sarus Cranes *Grus antigone*, the first sighting of the species in north-east India for several decades. The birds were of nominate race *antigone* and this record has extended their range by 500km. The Grey Treepie *Dendrocitta formosae* and Oriental Turtle Dove *Streptopelia orientalis* were found to be resident at lower altitudes (*ca.* 100m) than previously recorded[1].

Dibru-Saikhowa is also among the most important wintering sites of the Black Stork *Ciconia nigra*. However, no evidence of the Masked Finfoot *Heliopais personata* could be found during the survey.

In addition, the sanctuary supports viable populations of globally threatened mammals: Tiger *Panthera tigris*, Water Buffalo *Bubalus bubalis*, Asiatic Elephant *Elephas maximus* and Hoolock Gibbon *Hylobates hoolock*, and rare reptiles such as Assam Roofed Turtle *Kachuga sylhetensis*, making Dibru-Saikhowa an important wildlife refuge.

Midwinter waterfowl count

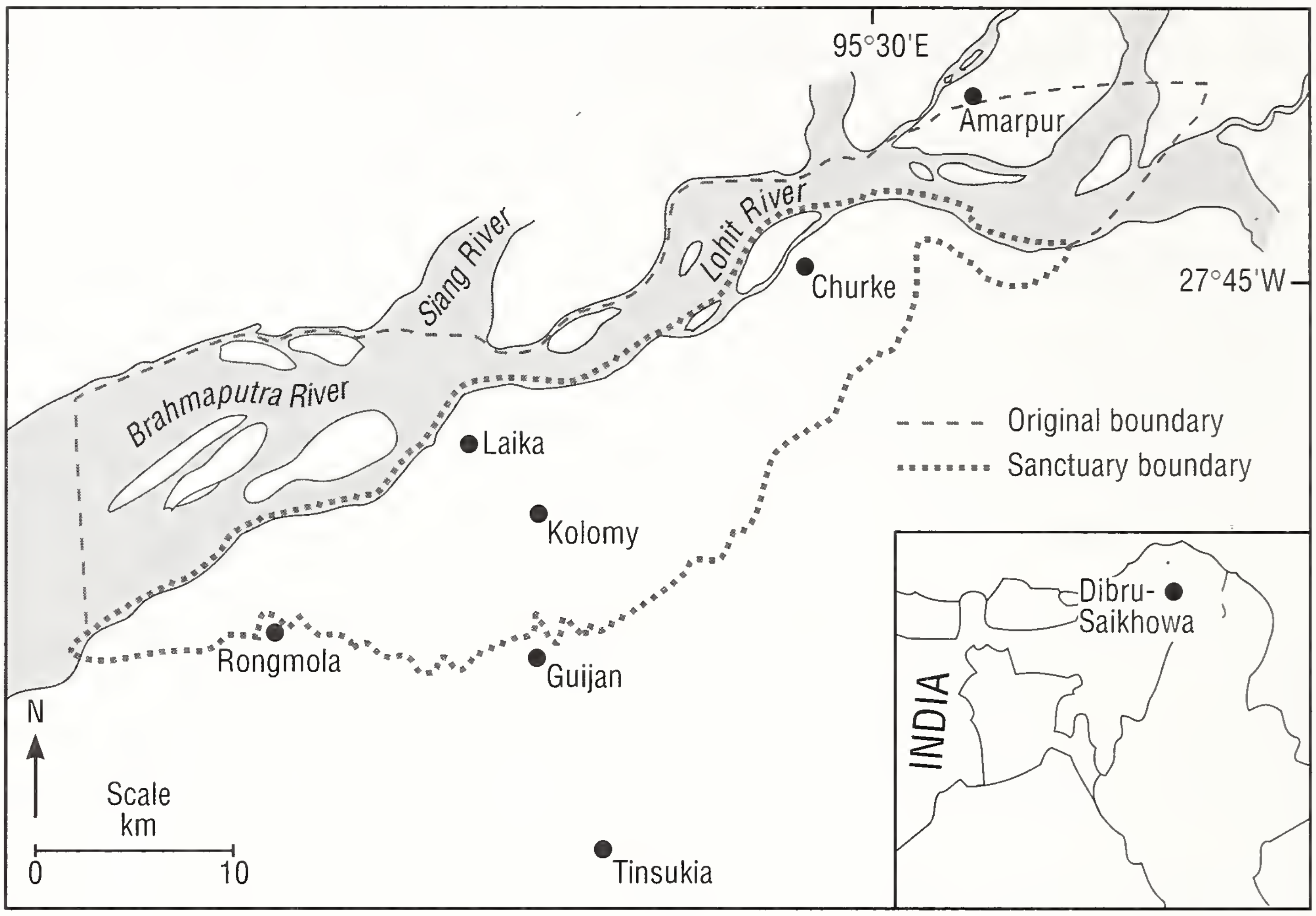
The first midwinter waterfowl census in Dibru-Saikhowa was conducted on 17th January 1993. However, I could cover only a tiny fraction of the sanctuary and some of the adjacent wetlands outside the boundary from Ranighat (west of Guijan) to Rongmola which included the Rongmola beel and a stretch of Dibru river. A total of 2,126 waterfowl was counted (see Appendix 1).

Conservation status

Before declaration of the Wildlife Sanctuary, the area was commercially logged, resulting in the clearing of large areas. Although commercial felling has stopped, illegal smuggling by the forest villagers and some fringe villagers from time to time has become a matter of great concern to the authorities.

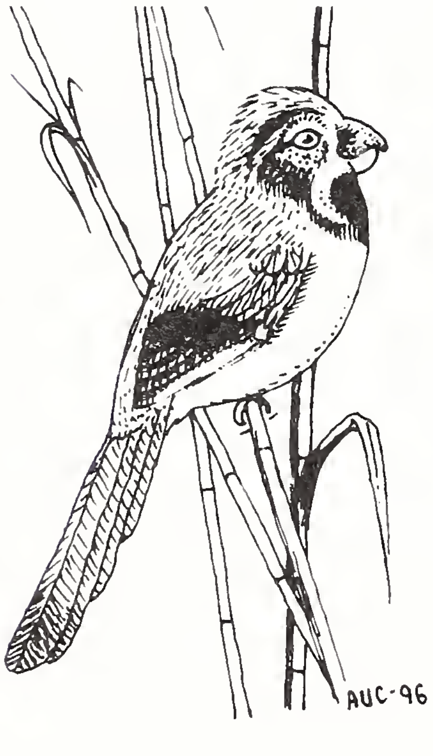
Although there is no encroachment in the sanctuary, the forest villagers of Laika and Dadhia

Figure 1: Map showing location of Dibru-Saikhowa Wildlife Sanctuary and some important sites.



have encroached onto some forest land adjacent to their villages. More than 110 khutis (cattle and buffalo camps) with more than 9,000 cattle and buffalo graze in the grasslands causing disturbance to many grassland species such as the Bengal Florican *Houbaropsis bengalensis*.

The channels and beels inside the wildlife sanctuary are frequently used by fishermen. Some of these fishermen fish by using poisons such as Thiodan (a non-biodegradable pesticide) especially in winter. This not only kills all types of fish but also affects all other life forms. However, poaching is still not a serious problem in Dibru-Saikhowa. Even the sale of turtles has been stopped by the authorities in nearby markets.



Black-breasted Parrotbill
Paradoxornis flavirostris
by Anwarhuddin Choudhury

A major problem faced by the sanctuary is regular floods with periodic high floods. Terrestrial birds suffer a lot as the bulk of the sanctuary is submerged during monsoon floods. Erosion by the Brahmaputra and the Lohit rivers and innumerable channels such as the Kolomy are also threatening the rich grassland and woodland.

Insufficient infrastructure and manpower has hampered smooth administration. Only 70 odd staff are distributed among two ranges and seven to nine camps. Despite these handicaps the staff continue patrols throughout the area.

The Amarpur area, where the Black-breasted Parrotbill and the Bengal Florican were sighted, is at present excluded from the sanctuary should certainly be added to it. Increase in manpower, improvements to the infrastructure and the setting up of a wireless system are also recommended as conservation measures.

Acknowledgements

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Fulvous Whistling-duck	*Dendrocygna bicolor*	R, U
Bar-headed Goose	*Anser indicus*	W, U
White-winged Duck	*Cairina scutulata*	R, U
Ferruginous Pochard	*Aythya nyroca*	W, C
Baer's Pochard	*Aythya baeri*	W, U
Great Hornbill	*Buceros bicornis*	L, U
Red-headed Trogon	*Harpactes erythrocephalus*	R, U
Blyth's Kingfisher	*Alcedo hercules*	R, U
Ruddy Kingfisher	*Halcyon coromanda*	R, U
Brown Fish Owl	*Ketupa zeylonensis*	R, C
Pale-capped Pigeon	*Columba punicea*	R, U
Bengal Florican	*Houbaropsis bengalensis*	R, U
Common Crane	*Grus grus*	W, U
Black-bellied Tern	*Sterna acuticauda*	U
Black Baza	*Aviceda leuphotes*	R, U
Pallas's Fish Eagle	*Haliaeetus leucoryphus*	R, L, U
Lesser Fish Eagle	*Ichthyophaga humilis*	U
Grey-headed Fish Eagle	*Ichthyophaga ichthyaetus*	R, C
Cinereous Vulture	*Aegypius monachus*	W, U
Greater Spotted Eagle	*Aquila clanga*	R, C
Darter	*Anhinga melanogaster*	R, C
White-bellied Heron	*Ardea insignis*	U
Chinese Pond Heron	*Ardeola bacchus*	U
Malayan Night Heron	*Gorsachius melanolophus*	U
Spot-billed Pelican	*Pelecanus philippensis*	R, L, U
Asian Openbill	*Anastomus oscitans*	R, C
Black-necked Stork	*Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus*	R, L, U
Lesser Adjutant	*Leptoptilos javanicus*	R, C
Greater Adjutant	*Leptoptilos dubius*	R, L, U
Jerdon's Bushchat	*Saxicola jerdoni*	R, U
Marsh Babbler	*Pellorneum palustre*	R, U
Black-breasted Parrotbill	*Paradoxornis flavirostris*	R, U

Table 1 *Some rare and endangered birds recorded from Dibru-Saikhowa Sanctuary, India. Key: R = resident; W = winter visitor; L = local movement; C = common; U = uncommon.*

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Appendix 1 *Waterfowl recorded along the Dibru river from Ranighat to Rongmola and in Rongmola beel, Dibru-Saikhowa Wildlife Sanctuary*

Lesser Whistling-duck	*Dendrocygna javanica*	43
Greylag Goose	*Anser anser*	206
Ruddy Shelduck	*Tadorna ferruginea*	12
Cotton Pygmy-goose	*Nettapus coromandelianus*	10
Gadwall	*Anas strepera*	180
Eurasian Wigeon	*Anas penelope*	80
Mallard	*Anas platyrhynchos*	38
Spot-billed Duck	*Anas poecilorhyncha*	110
Northern Shoveler	*Anas clypeata*	165
Northern Pintail	*Anas acuta*	80
Common Teal	*Anas crecca*	140
Common Pochard	*Aythya ferina*	10
Ferruginous Pochard	*Aythya nyroca*	50
Tufted Duck	*Aythya fuligula*	160
Unidentified Ducks		350
Purple Swamphen	*Porphyrio porphyrio*	20
Common Greenshank	*Tringa nebularia*	4
Green Sandpiper	*Tringa ochropus*	2
Common Sandpiper	*Actitis hypoleucos*	1
Black-winged Stilt	*Himantopus himantopus*	4
Little Ringed Plover	*Charadrius dubius*	4
Northern Lapwing	*Vanellus vanellus*	9
River Lapwing	*Vanellus duvaucelii*	2
Grey-headed Lapwing	*Vanellus cinereus*	12
Unidentified waders		50
Brown-headed Gull	*Larus brunnicephalus*	1
Black-headed Gull	*Larus ridibundus*	30
Unidentified Gulls		25
Little Grebe	*Tachybaptus ruficollis*	15
Little Cormorant	*Phalacrocorax niger*	30
Great Cormorant	*Phalacrocorax carbo*	20
Unidentified Cormorants		10
Little Egret	*Egretta garzetta*	30
Grey Heron	*Ardea cinerea*	2
Great Egret	*Casmerodius albus*	7
Intermediate Egret	*Mesophoyx intermedia*	7
Cattle Egret	*Bubulcus ibis*	25
Indian Pond Heron	*Ardeola grayii*	50
Little Heron	*Butorides striatus*	1
Unidentified Herons / Egrets		120
Asian Openbill	*Anastomus oscitans*	11

Anwaruddin Choudhury
The Rhino Foundation for Nature in North East India, c/o The Assam Co. Ltd., G. Bordoloi Path, Bamunimaidam, Guwahati 781 021, Assam, India.

Free Press

Compiled by Guy Dutson

This feature aims to publicise papers and reports of interest to members. If anyone has written or knows of recent publications worthy of inclusion in this feature, please send details to the OBC for future bulletins.

REGIONAL

Annual Review of the World Pheasant Association 1995/6 *(WPA, PO Box 5, Lower Basildon, Reading RG8 9PF, UK)* includes:
Brown Eared Pheasant project report *by Zhang Zheng-wang.*
Saving the Blyth's Tragopan *by Ron Sumner.*
Recent rare pheasant observations in Chin State, West Myanmar (Burma) *by Ben King* et al.

CHINA

The avifauna of Wuliangsuhai Inner Mongolia *by Xing Lianlian and Yang Guisheng (Dept Biology, University of Inner Mongolia, Huhhot 010021, China).* A 394 page book discussing the ecology of wetland birds. Available from NHBS.

INDIA

Yellow-throated Bulbuls at Horsley Hills *by S. Subramanya (HPHT Scheme, 'J' Block, University of Agricultural Sciences, GKVK Campus, Bangalore 560 065, India) and J. N. Prasad.* **J. Bombay Natural Hist. Soc. 93: 55-58** Four days observation of *Pycnonotus xantholaemus.*

Waterbirds and substrate quality of the Pichavaram wetlands, southern India *by R. Nagarajan and K. Thiyagesan (Division of Wildlife Biology, A.V.C. College, Mannampandal 609 305, Mayiladuthurai, Tamil Nadu, India).* **Ibis 138: 710-721.** Waterbird diversity and density related to nutrients and pH.

INDONESIA

Kukila 8 (PO Box 310, Bogor 16003, West Java, Indonesia) has 21 papers including:
Sumatra Bird Report
An annotated checklist of the birds of Way Kambas National Park, Sumatra *by S. Parrot and P. Andrew.*
The birds of Batam and Bintan Islands, Riau Archipelago *by S. Rajathurai.*

The birds of Sumbawa, Moyo and Sangeang Islands, Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia *by R. E. Johnstone (Western Australian Museum, Francis Street, Perth, Western Australia 6000)* et al. **Records of the Western Australian Museum 18: 157-178.** 172 species recorded by three teams.

The conservation status of forest birds on Flores and Sumbawa, Indonesia *by S. H. M. Butchart (Dept Zoology, Downing Street, Cambridge CB2 3EJ, UK)* et al. **Bird Conserv. Internatn. 6: 335-370.** Distribution and conservation analysis by site and species.

A proposed new species of munia, genus *Lonchura* (Estrildinae) *by R. L. Restall (c/o Aerocav 1330, PO Box 025304, Miami, FL 33102-5304, USA).* **Bull. Brit. Orn. Club 116: 137-142.** *Lonchura pallidiventer* is described from 13 captive birds probably from Kalimantan.

The Storm's Stork *Ciconia stormi* in Indonesia: breeding biology, population and conservation *by F. Danielsen (Nordic Agency for Development and Ecology, Skindergade 23, DK-1159 Copenhagen K, Denmark)* et al. **Ibis 139: 67-75.** Data and colour photographs from observations at a nest.

Behavioural ecology of the North Sulawesi Tarictic Hornbill *Penelopides exarhatus exarhatus* during the breeding season *by T. G. O'Brien (Wildlife Conservation Society, 185th and Southern Boulevard, Bronx, NY 10460, USA).* **Ibis 119: 97-101.** Observations from two nests.

JAPAN

A check-list of the birds of Okinawa Prefecture with notes on recent status including hypothetical records *by D. W. McWhirter (784 Michigan Street, Eaton rapids, MI 48827, USA)* et al. **Bull. Okinawa Prefectural Museum 22: 33-152** 418 species from Okinawa (includes Ryukyu Islands).

LAOS

The rediscovery of Giant Ibis *Pseudibis gigantea* with a review of previous records *by R. M. Thewlis (52 Long Reach Road, Chesterton, Cambridge CB4 1UJ, UK) and R. J. Timmins.* **Bird Conserv. Internatn. 6: 317-324.** 1993-1995 records and reports from Laos and Cambodia.

NORTH KOREA

(Data on the Chinese Nuthatch (*Sitta villosa* Verreaux) in North Korea and north-eastern China) *by J. Fiebig (Museum für Naturkunde, Invalidenstr. 43, D-10115 Berlin, Germany).* **Mitt. Zool. Mus. Berl. 68 Suppl.: Ann. Orn. 16: 135-155.** Distribution, ecology and sonograms.

PHILIPPINES

The Mindoro Scarlet-collared Flowerpecker *Dicaeum retrocinctum* - an alleged single island endemic *by E. Curio (Fakultät für Biologie, Ruhr-Universität Bochum, D-44780 Bochum, Germany)* et al. **J. Orn. 137: 361-365.** Sight records from Panay and Negros.

SRI LANKA

Black-winged Stilts with unusual hindneck markings in south-east Sri Lanka *by D. Warakagoda (Ceylon Bird Club, PO Box 11, Colombo, Sri Lanka)* et al. **Ceylon Bird Club Notes July 1996 51-55.** Several birds with black hindnecks reminiscent of the Australasian *H. himantopus leucocephalus.*

ClubWatch Round-up

When birdwatching anywhere in the region, it is important that all observers submit their complete records to the relevant national ornithological or conservation organisations, in addition, of course, to sending highlights to OBC. For a recent, up-to-date list of these organisations, see Bulletin 25, page 21. It should be noted, however, that the new BirdLife International Country Representative Organisation in Sri Lanka is the Field Ornithology Group of Sri Lanka. The details of alterations of where to submit records to are given opposite.

Sri Lanka

The Field Ornithology Group of Sri Lanka, c/o. Department of Zoology, University of Columbo, Columbo 3, Sri Lanka.

Dr Sarath Kotagama

Vietnam

The BirdLife Vietnam Programme Office, who collate records from Vietnam, recently changed address to 293B Tay Son, Dong Da, Hanoi. The new Tel/fax no. is 00 84 48517217. E-mail remains the same of course. Visiting OBC members are most welcome to call around for tea! See also the items relating to Vietnam in *Stray Feathers.*

Field identification of Asian *Gyps* vultures

There are four species of vultures in the genus *Gyps* that occur sympatrically in Asia: White-rumped Vulture *G. bengalensis*, Long-billed Vulture *G. indicus*, Eurasian Griffon *G. fulvus* and Himalayan Griffon *G. himalayensis*. They are easily confused and relatively little has been published on their identification.[1-8] In this paper I present field marks that will aid in distinguishing the different species. The information is based on field studies of a large number of individuals of all four species in different plumages, and complemented by studies of a large number of photographs. Topography terminology essentially follows Grant & Mullarney,[9] with a few terms first introduced here (Fig. 1). Measurements are from Brown & Amadon,[2] Roberts,[5] and measurements by Bill Clark (*in litt.*) on live White-rumped Vultures. The term subadult refers to any non-juvenile, non-adult plumage, while the term immature refers to any non-adult plumage (*i.e.* also including juvenile).

Distribution

The White-rumped Vulture breeds in SE Iran, SE Afghanistan, E Pakistan, India, Nepal and Bangladesh. It was formerly also widely distributed in SE Asia, but is now almost extinct there. It is sedentary, usually found in the lowlands (up to 1,000 m), but exceptionally as high as 3,100m.[1,2,4-8,10,14,16]

The Long-billed Vulture breeds in SE-most Pakistan, India (not in extreme SW), Nepal and Bangladesh, and was formerly also more widespread in SE Asia. Resident, it is usually found in the lowlands, although sometimes up to 1,500m. Two distinct subspecies are recognised, *indicus* in Pakistan and peninsular India south of the Gangetic plain and *tenuirostris** in India north of and including the Gangetic plain east to Assam, Nepal, Bangladesh, Burma and SE Asia (Mayr & Cottrell[14] are alone in claiming that it is indicus that occurs in Burma and SE Asia).1,2,4,5,7,8,14,16

The Eurasian Griffon breeds locally in N Africa, S Europe, Arabia and W and C Asia. In C Asia it breeds north to at least Pamir, in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Kashmir, possibly also in other parts of NW India and in Nepal and W China (*e.g.* Brown & Amadon,[2] Etchécopar & Hüe[11] and Mayr & Cottrell[14] extends its range to Altaj, but this is disputed by Clark [*in litt.*] and others. Brown & Amadon[2] also state that it breeds in China east to Nan Shan, but this is not corroborated by Cheng[15]). In winter it occurs widely in Pakistan, N India (south to *ca.* 20°N and east to Assam) and Nepal. It breeds in mountainous areas and has been seen up to 1980m in Nepal. In winter it also occurs in the plains. Two subspecies are generally recognised: *fulvus* breeds in most of the range, and *fulvescens* from Afghanistan/Pakistan east (distribution of the subspecies is poorly known).[1,2,4-7,10,12-14,16]

The Himalayan Griffon breeds in C Asia north to Altaj (Clark *in litt.*), in Afghanistan, N Pakistan, the Himalayas, S Tibet and C China. It is mainly resident at high altitude (usually 600m to 4,000m, occasionally up to 6100m), although immatures regularly winter in the plains of N India and Nepal.[1,2,4,5,11,13-16]

Eurasian Griffon and Himalayan Griffon overlap in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, SE Kazakhstan, northern Pakistan, Afghanistan and the Himalayas, uncommonly also in the plains of the N Indian subcontinent. White-rumped Vulture and Long-billed Vulture are sympatric in much of the Indian subcontinent, rarely also in SE Asia, and both can be seen together with Eurasian Griffon in Pakistan, N India and Nepal, sometimes also together with Himalayan Griffon in the same region.

Moult and ageing

Determination of whether a bird is in a juvenile or subsequent plumage is often helpful for identification. In all four species the **juvenile** plumage can be distinguished by its uniformity (all feathers are the same age, whereas older birds show a mixture of feathers of different generations). Moreover, the feathers of the body, wings and tail are distinctly more pointed in juveniles than in subsequent plumages; when perched this is most obvious on the median and greater coverts, tertials and rear scapulars, while in flight the shape of the secondaries is easily judged (in juveniles the trailing edge of the secondaries looks evenly serrated due to the pointed feathers).

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*synonym: *nudiceps* (cf. Mayr & Cottrell 1979).

Especially in White-rumped Vulture, juvenile secondaries are further characterised by being uniformly coloured, while non-juvenile secondaries show blacker tips. The feathers of the ruff are longer, more lanceolate, less fluffy and generally browner in juveniles than in older birds.

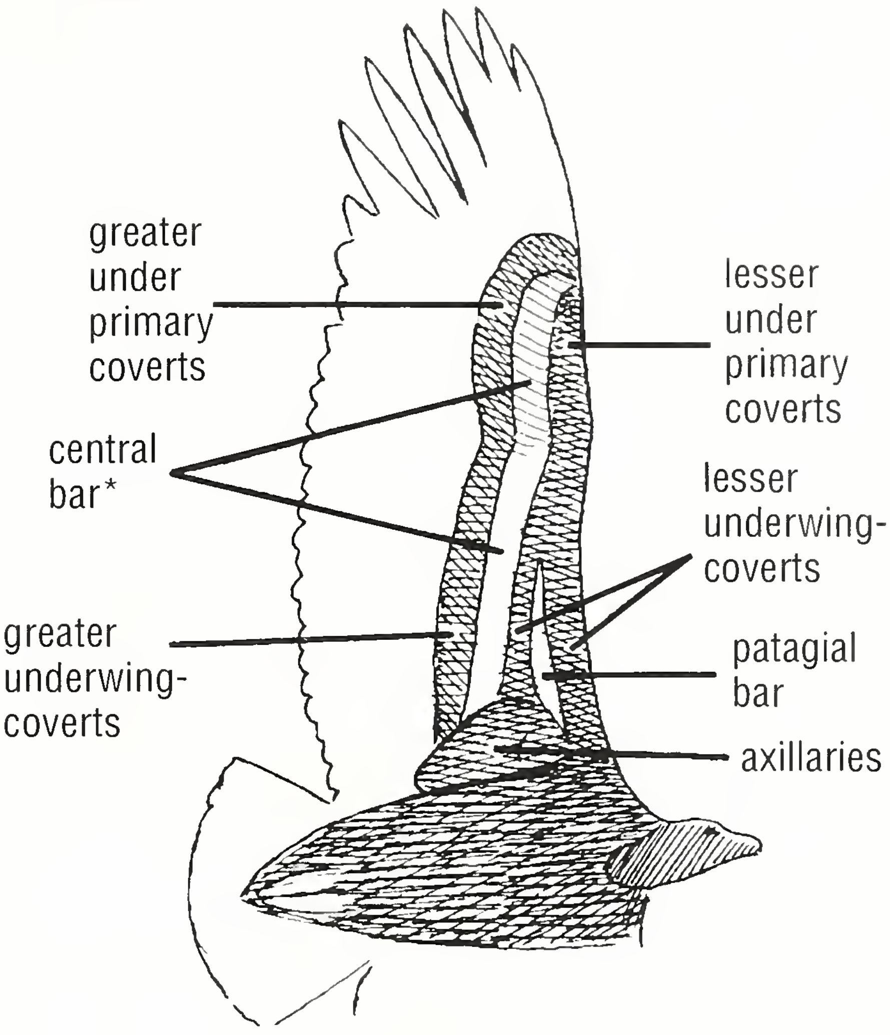
The start of the **post-juvenile moult** varies somewhat individually and between the species (presumably at least partly reflecting slightly different breeding periods; White-rumped may start considerably earlier than especially Eurasian Griffon and Himalayan Griffon[1,16]). In January-February many young White-rumpeds (*ca.* one year old) have moulted a large number of the juvenile body feathers and several upperwing-coverts and tertials, and the primary moult has begun. Other White-rumped Vultures have not yet started the post-juvenile moult at that time (some of these may actually be recently fledged!). In Long-billed, Eurasian Griffon and Himalayan Griffon the post-juvenile moult appears to start on average slightly later than in White-rumped, and in January-February most juveniles (close to one year old) have not yet started to moult, or have only renewed a few body feathers and/or upperwing-coverts. In all species the post-juvenile moult is very protracted.

The appearance of the resulting **first subadult plumage** is very similar to that of the juvenile, but most or all of the body feathers, upperwing-coverts and tertials have been renewed and have rounded tips; also a variable number of remiges and rectrices have been moulted and have rounded tips (In January-February at least Eurasian Griffon and Himalayan Griffon have often renewed only 2-3 inner primaries and no secondaries).

The succession of **subadult plumages** is not well known, but the **adult** plumage is gradually attained over a period of several years; Eurasian Griffon has been reported to be fully adult at the age of *ca.* 7 years.[12]

The **bill and cere** are all dark in juveniles of all four species (except for pale culmen of Long-billed *indicus* and some *tenuirostris*). The upper mandible gradually becomes paler, and in adults is largely pale (except in Long-billed *tenuirostris*). In Long-billed *indicus* and Himalayan Griffon the same applies to the cere, and in the former the claws also get paler. In Eurasian and Himalayan Griffons the iris is dark in the juvenile and progressively gets paler. The bare parts are often not fully adult when the rest of the plumage is largely adult-patterned (also the ruff generally takes a long time to become fully adult; Dick Forsman *pers. comm.*).

Fig. 1. Topography terminology of underside of wing.


greater under primary coverts
central bar*
greater underwing-coverts
lesser under primary coverts
lesser underwing-coverts
patagial bar
axillaries

* In this case the central bar equates the median underwing-coverts and the median under primary coverts, but *e.g.* the bases or all of the greater underwing-coverts and lowest row of lesser underwing-coverts may also be included or just the bases of the median underwing-coverts.

DESCRIPTIONS

White-rumped Vulture

Body length 75-85cm, wingspan 180-210cm, weight *ca.* 3.5-5.7kg (ave. 4.4kg).

ADULT PERCHED: Unmistakable. Mostly blackish plumage with slate-grey secondaries. At close range shows thin whitish streaks on underside and feathering medially on tibia (not always visible). Bare skin on head and neck rather dark brown-grey, usually with a pink or maroon tinge to neck; hindneck has very sparse whitish feathering. Upper mandible pale bluish-grey, shading into blackish on tip and along cutting edges. Lower mandible and cere blackish. Tarsus and toes medium to dark grey, claws blackish. Iris dark brown, looking blackish.

JUVENILE AND YOUNG SUBADULT PERCHED: Gives an overall dark brown impression, darker than any of the other species except juvenile and young subadult Himalayan Griffon. Shows dark brown underside and feathering on lateral tibia, with rather clearcut, thin, whitish streaks; plain, dark brown mantle and scapulars; dark brown lesser and median coverts with thin, indistinct pale streaks; uniformly blackish-brown greater coverts; and greyish-white bare skin to the head and neck (latter often pinkish- or bluish-tinged, and throat generally dark grey), with sparse, whitish or pale brown feathering. The mantle, scapulars, upperwing-coverts and underside often become medium brown due to wear and bleaching. Bill and cere blackish in juvenile, while top of upper mandible diffusely pale bluish-grey basally in young subadult. Tarsus, toes, claws and iris as in adult.

OLDER SUBADULT PERCHED: Intermediate in plumage between adult and juvenile.

ADULT IN FLIGHT: From below characterised by blackish body, remiges and rectrices, contrasting with white underwing-coverts (except for narrow blackish leading edge, widest at carpal). In good light secondaries and innermost primaries are greyish-tinged with a blacker trailing edge. From above the most notable feature is the contrasting white back and rump. Also, secondaries contrastingly slate-grey with blackish tips.

JUVENILE AND YOUNG SUBADULT IN FLIGHT: Overall rather dark plumage, with from above comparatively slight contrast between dark brown lesser and median coverts and blackish-brown remiges (slightly more pronounced contrast when wing-coverts worn and bleached); dark brown back and rump; and from below rather dark underwing-coverts and underside of body.

OLDER SUBADULT IN FLIGHT: Very dark plumage with much white on underwing-coverts (except for distinct, dark leading edge to the wing), and white or mottled-white back/rump.

Long-billed Vulture

Body length 80-95 cm, wingspan *ca.* 205cm, no information on weight.

The two subspecies, *indicus* and *tenuirostris*, are distinguishable in the field. In juvenile *indicus* the head and neck appear pale (skin of head blackish or grey, but mainly covered with whitish feathers, and neck pale pinkish). Adult *indicus* shows blackish head and neck with sparse whitish feathers mainly on the nape. In contrast, all plumages of *tenuirostris* show blackish, completely or nearly unfeathered head and neck. In juvenile *indicus* the bill and cere are blackish with a pale pinkish culmen, (possibly not shown by very young birds) while adult *indicus* has largely or entirely pale pinkish or yellowish bill (often with some blackish distally on sides) and pale pinkish, yellowish or greyish cere. In young juvenile *tenuirostris* the bill and cere are all blackish, though from at least January/February they often show a pale culmen. In subadult and adult *tenuirostris* the bill and cere are similar to that of juvenile or young subadult *indicus*, while the cere is blackish. Moreover, the bill is on average shorter and deeper, and the entire head appears less drawn-out and less slim in *indicus* than in *tenuirostris*. In all plumages, the mantle, scapulars and lesser and median coverts generally appear paler in *indicus* than in *tenuirostris*. The feathers on the lateral side of the tibia are relatively long and firm (*i.e.* contour feathers) in *indicus*, while they are mainly downy in *tenuirostris* (as pointed out by John Schmitt). Interestingly, *indicus* nests on crags, while *tenuirostris* breeds in trees[1,2,16]. Their taxonomic status needs to be investigated and they may prove to be better considered as separate species.

ADULT PERCHED: Characterised by pale brown upperside, upperwing-coverts and underside, contrasting markedly with blackish flight-feathers; blackish, sparsely feathered head and neck; and characteristic colour pattern of the bill and cere (see above).

JUVENILE PERCHED: Easily distinguished from adult by *e.g.* darker lesser and median coverts and mantle/scapulars with prominent pale streaks (each feather is dark brown with a distinct pale central streak, which, however, often coalesce on the lesser coverts so that these appear rather uniformly pale); lack of broad pale tips to median and greater coverts; slightly darker and more distinctly pale-streaked underside; and browner ruff, with longer, more lanceolate and less fluffy feathers; in *indicus* also much paler head and neck, and less extensively pale bill and cere than in adult (see above).

SUBADULT PERCHED: Young subadult are most similar to juvenile, but are paler overall, and the upperwing-coverts show less distinct pale streaks and broader pale tips (also to greater coverts). Also, underside less distinctly streaked, and bill paler, in *indicus* also cere (see above). Older subadults are more like adults.

ALL PLUMAGES IN FLIGHT: The different plumages are rather similar in flight, although young birds are slightly darker on the upperwing-coverts and mantle/scapulars than older birds. There is pronounced individual variation in the pattern of the underwings. Most individuals show a pale brown underside and relatively poorly marked underwing-coverts, contrasting distinctly with the remiges. However, often the lesser underwing-coverts are contrastingly dark brown, and sometimes the underwing-coverts are rather uniformly dark brown with several very narrow pale bars (Fig. 19). From above shows pale brown upperwing-coverts, contrasting markedly with remiges, and pale, generally whitish, back and rump. In older subadult and adult *indicus* and in all *tenuirostris*, blackish head/neck usually evident.

Eurasian Griffon

Body length 95-105cm, wingspan 240-290cm, weight *ca.* 6.8-8.2kg.

The two subspecies, *fulvus* and *fulvescens*, are very similar. The latter is said to be paler and more rufous.[12]

ADULT PERCHED: Uniformly pale rufescent brown upperside and upperwing-coverts, contrasting markedly with remiges; rather dark brown underside (except for whitish feathering medially on tibia), with relatively distinct, thin, whitish streaks; mainly whitish, rather fully feathered head and neck; whitish, fluffy ruff; dark grey cere and pale yellowish bill; medium or dark grey tarsi and toes, and dark grey claws; and pale yellowish-brown iris.

JUVENILE PERCHED: Similar to adult, but shows indistinct, thin, pale streaks to lesser and median coverts; paler greater coverts lacking broad pale tips; paler underside with less contrasting whitish streaks; brown ruff with longer, more lanceolate and less fluffy feathers; blackish bill; and dark grey-brown iris.

SUBADULT PERCHED: Intermediate between adult and juvenile.

ALL PLUMAGES IN FLIGHT: Differences between plumages relatively slight. Medium to rather dark brown, usually rufous-tinged, underside of body and lesser underwing-coverts; usually rather broad whitish central bar (sometimes including greater underwing-coverts and greater under primary coverts as well); and greater underwing-coverts usually blacker than lesser underwing-coverts, often showing pale fringes and forming a contrasting dark bar. At least adults often show rather uniform underwing-coverts, with up to four narrow whitish bands. The upperwing-coverts are pale (palest in adult), contrasting markedly with the remiges.

Himalayan Griffon

Body length 115-125cm, wingspan *ca.* 260-310cm, weight *ca.* 8-12kg.

ADULT PERCHED: Very pale plumage, with pale buffy-white or brownish upperside (rear scapulars dark-centred), underside and upperwing-coverts, contrasting markedly with blackish remiges and mainly blackish greater coverts (inners broadly pale-tipped). Head and neck mainly covered with whitish feathers (pinkish skin often visible at least on foreneck). Ruff prominent, roughly same colour as upperside. Bill and cere pale yellowish, or cere more greyish. Tarsi and toes pale pinkish, and claws grey. Iris pale yellowish-brown.

JUVENILE PERCHED: Overall dark plumage with distinct, thin, whitish streaks to underside and entire upperside and lesser and median coverts. Ruff brown, consisiting of long, lanceolate feathers. Bill and cere initially black, though from January-February bill often extensively pale horn or greyish. Tarsi and toes pale pinkish or greyish-pink, claws grey. Iris dark grey-brown.

SUBADULT PERCHED: Intermediate in appearance between juvenile and adult, gradually becoming paler above and below, and attaining paler bill, cere and iris. Young subadults differ from juvenile mainly in broader (especially distally), and more diffuse pale streaks on upperwing-coverts.

JUVENILE AND YOUNG SUBADULT IN FLIGHT: Gives a dark impression, both above and below. At close range shows heavily pale-streaked plumage.

OLDER SUBADULT AND ADULT IN FLIGHT: Gives an overall pale impression with contrasting blackish remiges and rectrices. The underwing-coverts and under primary coverts are white with a narrow dark leading edge (widest at the carpal), generally contrasting with at least slightly darker body.

IDENTIFICATION

White-rumped Vulture

ADULT PERCHED: Unmistakable. Mainly blackish plumage with white ruff and greyer secondaries are diagnostic.

JUVENILE AND YOUNG SUBADULT PERCHED: Easily distinguished from **juvenile and young subadult Long-billed Vulture** by distinctly darker lesser and median coverts, contrasting less clearly with the remiges (Long-billed shows prominent pale streaks, making coverts appear pale, in marked contrast with remiges); lack of distinct pale streaks to mantle and scapulars (well-marked pale streaks in Long-billed); and distinctly darker underside (including feathering on lateral tibia), with narrower, more clearcut, whiter and more contrasting streaks. Compared to Long-billed *tenuirostris* the head and neck are distinctly paler (blackish and nearly unfeathered in *tenuirostris*). In juvenile White-rumped the bill and cere are all blackish, while in young subadults the upper mandible is usually pale bluish-grey *basally*. In contrast, in juvenile and young subadult Long-billed (except perhaps young juvenile *tenuirostris*) the entire length of the culmen (including tip) is pale pinkish or yellowish; in young subadult *indicus* the cere is also pale. The bill of White-rumped is usually slightly shorter, deeper and more bulbous, than in Long-billed Vulture *indicus*, but some Long-billed are very similar to White-rumped. Compared to Long-billed *tenuirostris* the difference in the shape of the bill is usually more obvious, as *tenuirostris* generally has a longer and more slender bill than *indicus*.

More easily separated from **older subadult and adult Long-billed Vulture** by the much darker upperside, underside and upperwing-coverts; paler head and neck (mainly blackish head and neck in older subadult and adult *indicus*, though neck often pinkish in subadult; all blackish head and neck in *tenuirostris*); and differently coloured bill and cere (in Long-billed variable amount of pale pinkish or yellowish on bill, always covering entire culmen, and in *indicus* also pale cere).

Easily told from **juvenile Eurasian Griffon** by considerably darker and less rufous-tinged upperside, underside and upperwing-coverts, contrasting much less with the remiges. The head and neck (especially throat) are generally less 'woolly' and less whitish than in Eurasian Griffon, although some White-rumped approach Eurasian Griffon. In direct comparison, White-rumped is distinctly smaller and lighter than Eurasian Griffon, with less massive head and bill.

Told from **subadult and adult Eurasian Griffon** by much the same characters. The difference in the shade of the upperparts and upperwing-coverts is even more pronounced. However, in subadult and adult Eurasian Griffon the underside is distinctly darker with more contrasting whitish streaks than in juvenile Eurasian Griffon, and the difference from juvenile White-rumped is sometimes slight. Moreover, White-rumped differs from subadult and adult Eurasian Griffon by the uniformly dark greater coverts, scapulars and tertials (in Eurasian Griffon these feathers have broad pale tips) and by the differently coloured bill (more or less extensively pale yellowish upper mandible in Griffon).

Easily separated from **juvenile and young subadult Himalayan Griffon** by much less distinctly pale-streaked lesser and median coverts; plain mantle and scapulars (distinctly pale-streaked in Himalayan Griffon); and usually less heavily pale-streaked underside (though some White-rumped are close to Himalayan Griffon on their underside). Also, the head (especially throat) is usually less feathered and less-white; the tarsus/toes are usually darker and greyer (pale pinkish or greyish-pink in Himalayan Griffon); and the bill is usually darker (often extensively pale, also on tip, in juvenile Himalayan Griffon, from around one year old). When seen together, White-rumped is usually strikingly smaller than Himalayan Griffon.

The dark plumage of juvenile White-rumped prevents confusion with older **subadult and adult Himalayan Griffon**.

OLDER SUBADULT PERCHED: Easily identified by much the same characters as identify adults.

ADULT IN FLIGHT: Unmistakable. Mainly blackish plumage with white underwing-coverts/under primary coverts and white back/rump diagnostic.

JUVENILE AND YOUNG SUBADULT IN FLIGHT: Confusable with **all plumages of Long-billed Vulture. From below** distinguished by distinctly darker body (but beware of heavily worn and bleached White-rumped; Fig. 37). Also, the pattern of the underwings differs in several ways:

(1) The lesser underwing-coverts and axillaries are considerably darker than in most Long-billeds, and contrast less with the remiges; in White-rumped the lesser underwing-coverts, axillaries and body are the same colour (though see Fig. 37), while in Long-billed the lesser underwing-coverts are usually at least slightly darker than the axillaries and body. (2) The whitish patagial bar is more prominent and more contrasting (though sometimes it is equally distinct in Long-billed). (3) There is a whitish central bar of variable prominence, while the median and lesser under primary coverts are dark. In contrast, Long-billed shows a pale brown central bar and median under primary coverts, and the central bar is generally broader than in White-rumped. (4) In White-rumped the greater underwing-coverts and greater under primary coverts are uniformly brown-grey, marginally to distinctly paler than the lesser underwing-coverts, while in Long-billed these feathers are usually dark grey with pale fringes, and form a contrasting dark bar. Note that some (only old subadult and adult?) Long-billed show equally dark lesser coverts as White-rumped, and that sometimes the entire underwing-coverts are uniformly dark brown with several thin pale bars (Fig. 19); the latter pattern is not shown by White-rumped. **From above** White-rumped is easily separated from Long-billed by much darker upperside and lesser and median coverts, contrasting much less with the remiges (though White-rumped with strongly bleached lesser and median coverts can approach dark juvenile Long-billed). Another character which immediately distinguishes White-rumped from Long-billed is the dark back and rump (back and rump whitish in Long-billed, though sometimes pale brown in adult; however, note that the colour of the back and rump is sometimes difficult to judge on soaring birds due to overlapping scapulars). In White-rumped the head and neck are pale, whereas in Long-billed except juvenile and young subadult *indicus* the head and neck are blackish.

Resembles all plumages of **Eurasian Griffon**. **From below** distinguished from juvenile Eurasian Griffon by usually darker and less rufous-tinged body and lesser underwing-coverts, contrasting less with the remiges (though see Fig. 37). At close range the underside shows more contrasting whitish streaks than in juvenile Eurasian Griffon. However, compared to subadult and adult Eurasian Griffon, the difference in colour and streaking is rather slight. The whitish central bar is usually less prominent than in Eurasian Griffon. Unlike in some juvenile Eurasian Griffon the underwing never shows a very wide whitish central bar which also includes the greater underwing-coverts. The greater underwing-coverts and greater under primary coverts never form a contrasting dark bar, whereas in Eurasian Griffon these feathers are frequently blackish, darker than the lesser coverts, with pale fringes, and form a characteristic dark bar. Also, White-rumped does not show more than two whitish bands on the underwing-coverts, whereas at least old subadult and adult Eurasian Griffon often show up to four rather narrow whitish bands. **From above** easily separated from Eurasian Griffon by much darker mantle, scapulars, back, rump and lesser and median coverts, contrasting less with the remiges (though beware of strongly worn and bleached White-rumped).

The dark plumage prevents confusion with **older subadult and adult Himalayan Griffons**. However, especially from a distance it is very similar to **juvenile and young subadult Himalayan Griffon**. The notable size difference is usually difficult to judge without direct comparison. However, with experience the silhouette is quite clearly different: White-rumped appears less heavily built and to have slightly narrower wings (especially the hand), a shorter tail and larger, more protruding head. When gliding overhead, the carpals tend to look more pointed than in Himalayan Griffon. Also, White-rumped generally soars on slightly raised wings with only slightly up-bent 'fingers', while Himalayan Griffon usually soars on more level wings with more distinctly up-bent 'fingers'. **From below** the most important difference is the (normally) reduced pale streaking compared to Himalayan Griffon, although some birds are very similar in this respect. Unlike Himalayan Griffon, the greater underwing-coverts and greater under primary coverts are often so pale brown-grey that they form a contrasting pale band. **From above** very similar to Himalayan Griffon, but has very indistinct pale streaks to lesser and median coverts, and lacks pale streaks on the mantle, scapulars, back and rump (distinct pale streaks in Himalayan Griffon, especially on lesser and median coverts, though this is difficult to see from a distance).

OLDER SUBADULT IN FLIGHT: The only confusion risk is some **old subadult or adult Eurasian Griffons** with extensively whitish underwing-coverts (Fig. 21). However, the underside and the leading edge of the wings are generally distinctly blacker, the head and neck usually markedly darker, and in good light the secondaries usually appear greyer with more contrasting dark tips than in Eurasian Griffon. If seen from above the much darker upperside and upperwing-coverts easily distinguish White-rumped from Eurasian Griffon.

Long-billed Vulture

ADULT PERCHED: Easily distinguished from all plumages of **White-rumped Vulture** (see p.38).

Easily confused with **subadult and adult Eurasian Griffon**. In direct comparison Long-billed is noticeably smaller and less heavily built, with less massive head and bill. The plumage is overall less rufous-tinged than in Eurasian Griffon. The lesser coverts are usually less uniformly pale than in Eurasian Griffon, since the lower, at least, frequently show slightly darker bases. The median coverts show darker bases, unlike in Eurasian Griffon. The underside and feathering on the lateral side of the tibia are distinctly paler, and lack the distinct, narrow, whitish streaks of Eurasian Griffon. The head and neck are blacker and less feathered (head and neck mainly covered with whitish feathers in Eurasian Griffon). Unlike Eurasian Griffon, the culmen of the upper mandible is always pale to the tip, and in *indicus* the cere is pale (contrastingly dark cere and sometimes tip of upper mandible in Eurasian Griffon). The iris is dark (chestnut), whereas it is paler (yellowish-brown) in old subadult and adult Eurasian Griffons, and unlike Eurasian Griffon, the claws are pale.

Differs from **juvenile Eurasian Griffon** by much the same characters (except for iris, which looks dark in juvenile Eurasian Griffon). Additional differences are: white ruff, consisting of short, fluffy feathers (brown, with longer and more lanceolate feathers in juvenile Eurasian Griffon); dark bases and pale tips to greater coverts, forming a dark bar (more uniformly coloured greater coverts in Eurasian Griffon); and in *indicus* pale cere and extensively pale upper mandible (all blackish bill and cere in juvenile Eurasian Griffon). The underside is paler than in juvenile Eurasian Griffon, with less distinct pale streaks.

Adult Long-billed is confusable with **older subadult and adult Himalayan Griffons**. In direct comparison, Long-billed is much smaller and less heavily built, with less heavy bill. The head and neck are blacker and more sparsely feathered and the ruff is less prominent and more contrastingly white than in Himalayan Griffon (whitish or buffish-white feathering on head and neck in Himalayan Griffon, but at least foreneck sometimes rather bare and pinkish). Compared to adult Himalayan Griffon the mantle, scapulars and upperwing-coverts are slightly darker and browner, and the median and lower lesser coverts usually have darker bases. However, subadult Himalayan Griffons can be very similar to Long-billed in the colour and pattern of the upperside and upperwing-coverts. The tarsi and toes are medium to dark grey with contrasting pale pinkish claws, while in Himalayan Griffon the tarsi are pale pinkish and the claws are grey. The iris is darker than in Himalayan Griffon (yellowish-brown in old subadult and adult Himlayan Griffon). The colour pattern of the bill and cere is usually different from that of Himalayan Griffon, especially in the subspecies *tenuirostris* (largely or entirely pale yellowish bill and cere in adult Himalayan Griffon).

JUVENILE PERCHED: Easily separated from **juvenile and young subadult White-rumped Vulture** (see p.36 for differences).

Easily distinguished from juvenil**e Eurasian Griffon**. Seen side by side the difference in size of body, head and bill is obvious (see above). The plumage is overall less rufous-tinged than in Eurasian Griffon. The lesser and, especially, median coverts are darker with more conspicuous pale streaks than in Eurasian Griffon, and the same applies to the mantle and scapulars. The underside and the feathering on the lateral side of the tibia are slightly paler than in Eurasian Griffon and show more diffuse, broader and less contrasting pale streaks. In *indicus* the face is blacker and less feathered and the neck is usually less feathered, while in *tenuirostris* all of the the head and neck are blacker and less feathered than in Eurasian Griffon (head and neck mainly covered with whitish feathers in Eurasian Griffon). In *indicus* and some *tenuirostris* the entire culmen is pale, unlike Eurasian Griffon.

Juvenile Long-billed differs from **subadult and adult Eurasian Griffon** by much the same characters. However, the difference in the pattern of the lesser and median coverts is even more pronounced as these are uniformly pale brown without pale streaks in Eurasian Griffon. Also, unlike Eurasian Griffon, the greater coverts lack broad pale tips and consequently do not form a dark bar. The underparts are distinctly paler than in Eurasian Griffon and show less distinct whitish streaks. The bill is less extensively pale, and the iris is darker.

Juvenile Long-billed is similar to **juvenile Himalayan Griffon**, and shows similarly patterned mantle, scapulars and upperwing-coverts, although the pale streaks are generally broader, especially on the lesser coverts (though sometimes they are very similar; see Fig. 28 and 29). In direct comparison the size difference is obvious (see Fig. 29). The bill is relatively longer and more slender than in Himalayan Griffon. The clear-cut pale pinkish culmen shown by *indicus* at least is probably never matched by Himalayan Griffon (bill of latter is often rather pale, at least from January, though not only on the culmen). In *indicus* the face is more blackish, and the neck generally less feathered than in Himalayan Griffon, and in *tenuirostris* the head and neck are considerably blacker and barer. The underside is distinctly paler, with broader, more diffuse, buffier and less contrasting pale streaks than in Himalayan Griffon. The tarsi and toes are medium or dark grey, whereas they are pale pinkish or greyish-pink in Himalayan Griffon.

SUBADULT PERCHED: Easily distinguished from **juvenile and young subadult White-rumped Vulture** (see p.36).

Differs from **Eurasian Griffon** by much the same characters as distinguish adult and juvenile from Eurasian Griffon.

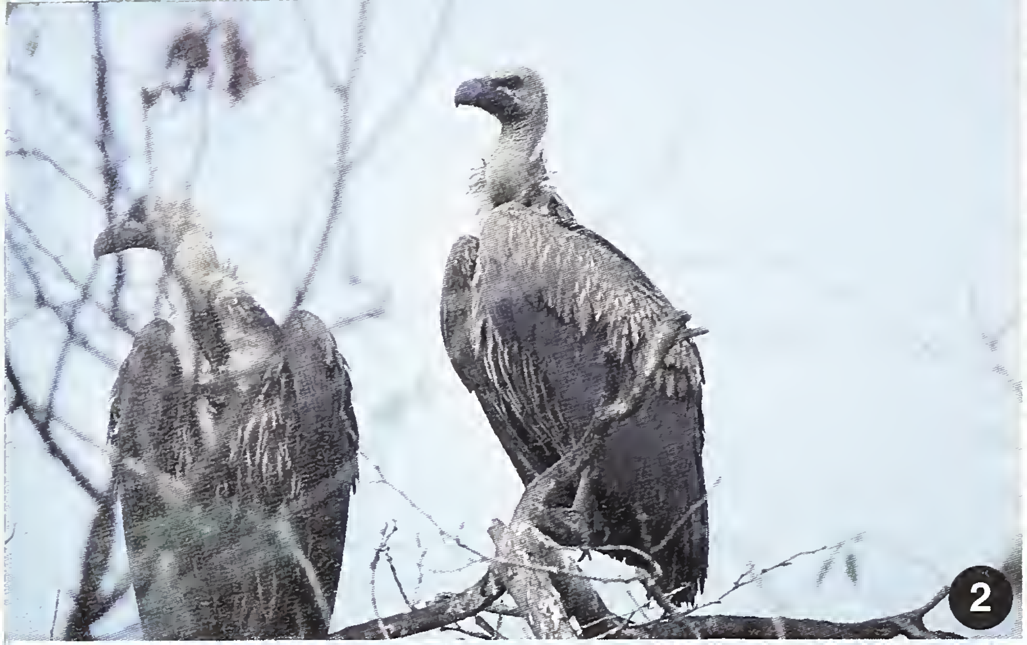
Could be confused with **Himalayan Griffon** in corresponding plumage. Young subadults can be told by much the same characters as distinguish between juveniles of the two species. Older subadults are quite similar to some subadult Himalayan Griffons, but can be distinguished by size; shape and pattern of bill; colour of tarsi and toes; and colour and amount of feathering of head and neck (see adult, above).

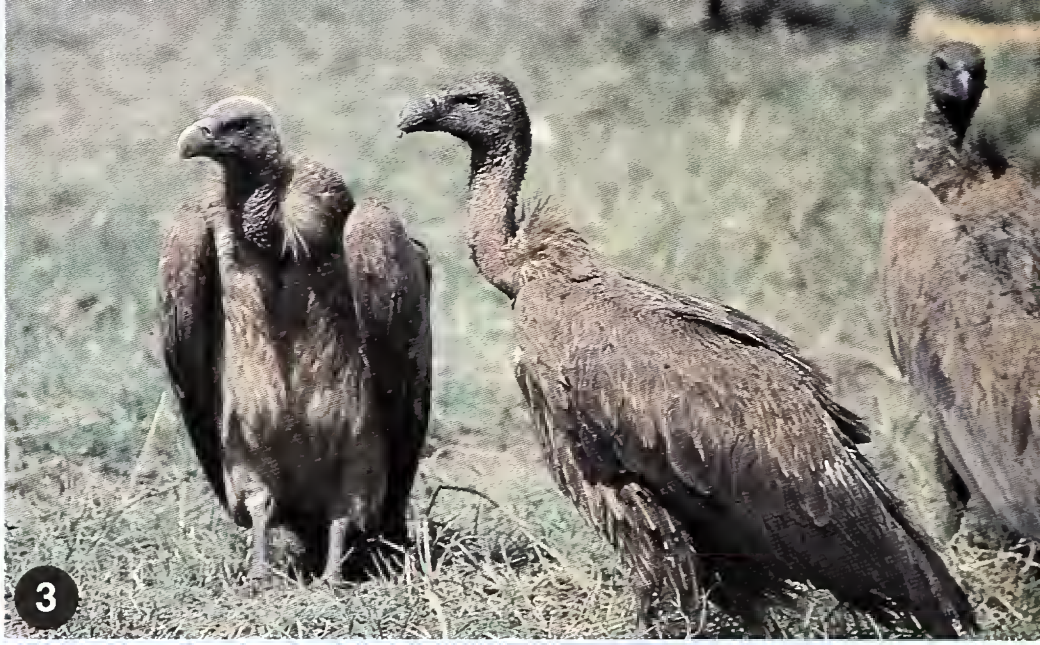
ALL PLUMAGES IN FLIGHT: Easily distinguished from **White-rumped Vulture** (see p.36).

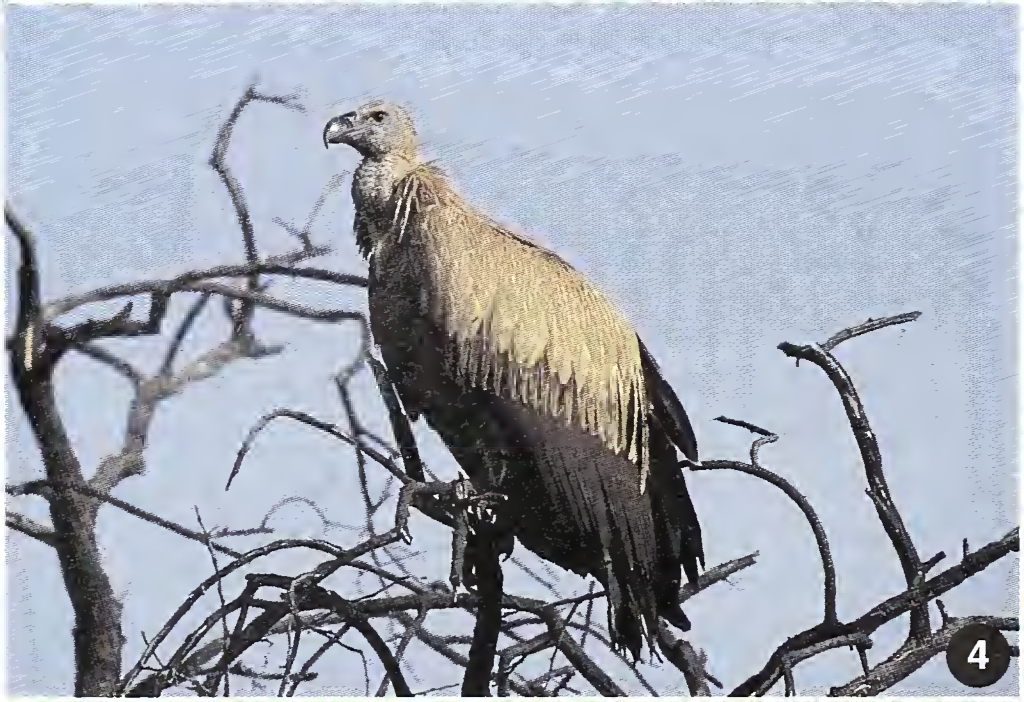
Confusable with **all plumages of Eurasian Griffon**. The smaller and lighter build than Eurasian Griffon is not always clear without direct comparison. The plumage is overall less rufous-tinged than in Eurasian Griffon. **From below** it is usually easily distinguished from Eurasian Griffon by paler body and pale brown rather than whitish central bar; in Long-billed the body (at least rear), axillaries and central bar are similarly coloured, and are usually at least slightly paler than the lesser underwing-coverts, whereas in Eurasian Griffon the body and lesser underwing-coverts are concolorous and are significantly darker than the central bar. The underwing-coverts of Long-billed are often paler and more uniformly brown than in Eurasian Griffon (Fig. 18). Individuals with dark underwing-coverts with several thin pale bars (Fig. 19) differ from similarly patterned Eurasian Griffons by distinctly paler body than underwing-coverts (body as dark as lesser underwing-coverts in Eurasian Griffon); also the pale bars are sometimes less distinct in Long-billed than in any Eurasian Griffon. Older subadult and adult *indicus* and all *tenuirostris* further differ from Eurasian Griffon by the blackish head and neck. **From above** Long-billed usually differs from Eurasian Griffon by whiter back and rump, but there is some overlap. Subadult and adult birds also differ from Eurasian Griffon by the dark bases to the median coverts, forming a second dark bar on the upperwing-coverts (occasionally absent).

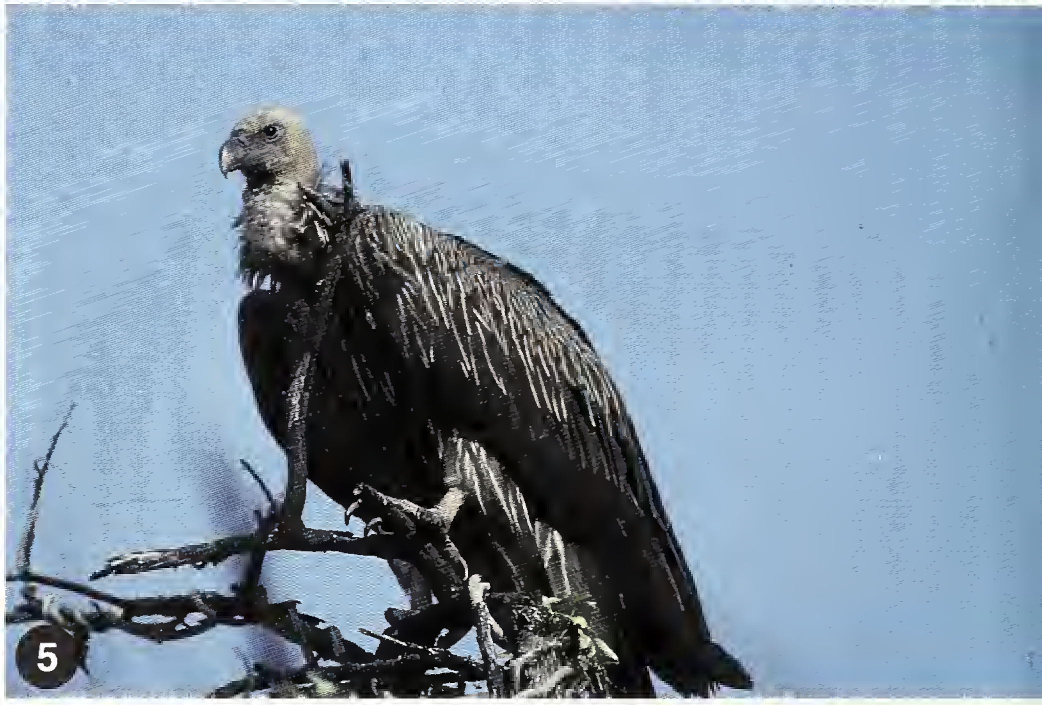
Easily distinguished from **juvenile and young subadult Himalayan Griffons** by the overall paler plumage. **From below** differs in much the same ways as from Eurasian Griffon and especially immature White-rumped (see above and p.37, respectively). **From above** usually told by considerably paler lesser and median coverts, contrasting more with the remiges (this is surprising, since the upperwing-coverts are often so similar in these two species when perched; however, bleached Himalayan Griffon can approach dark juvenile Long-billed; Fig. 33), and by the whitish back and rump (dark in Himalayan Griffon).

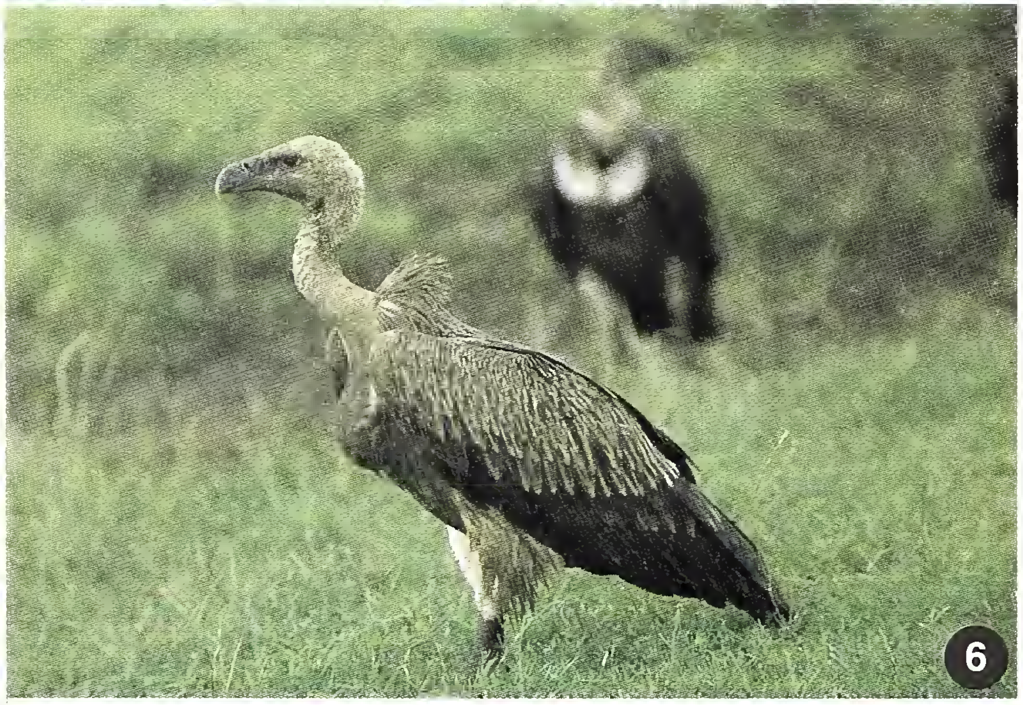
Confusable with **older subadult and adult Himalayan Griffon**. **From below** distinguished by the browner underwing-coverts and under primary coverts, which are never all white with a narrow dark leading edge as they are in Himalayan Griffon. Unlike Himalayan Griffon the underwing-coverts are never paler than the body, and the body never appears close to whitish. Compared to subadult Himalayan Griffon the body is less distinctly streaked in Long-billed. **From above** Long-billed is similar to Himalayan Griffon, but is generally slightly darker and browner on the











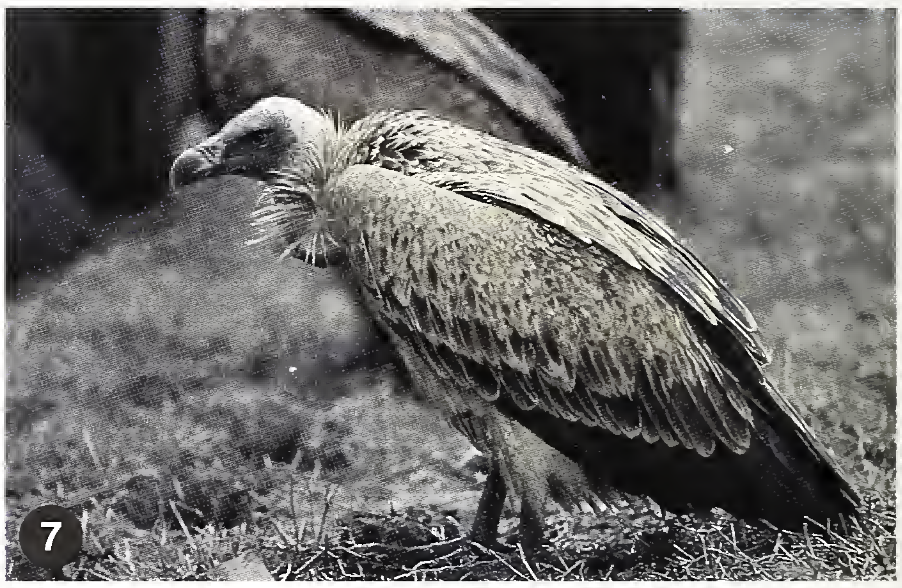


Fig. 2. Juvenile White-rumped Vultures Gyps bengalensis, *India. January. Note overall rather dark plumage; relatively indistinct whitish streaks to lesser and median coverts; thin, distinct whitish streaks on underparts; and all black bill/cere. (Photo: Markku Huhta-Koivisto)*

Fig. 3. Young subadult White-rumped Vulture Gyps bengalensis *(right), and juvenile Long-billed Vulture* Gyps i. indicus *(left), Rajasthan, India, February. Note overall rather dark plumage, thin whitish streaks below, and all black bill/cere of former, and pale pinkish culmen (including tip) to upper mandible and rather pale underside of latter. (Photo: Eva Wallander)*

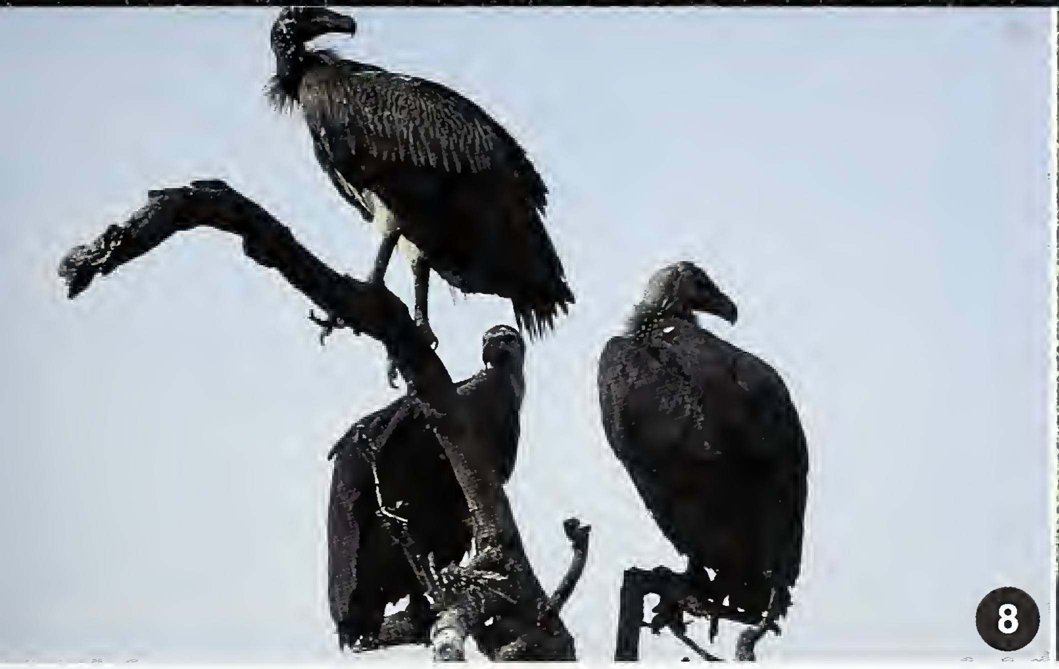
Fig. 4. Juvenile Eurasian Griffon Gyps fulvus, *Gujurat, India, January. Note pale, rufous-tinged lesser and median coverts with indistinct pale streaks; rather indistinctly pale-streaked underside; and all black bill and cere. (Photo: Bill Clark)*

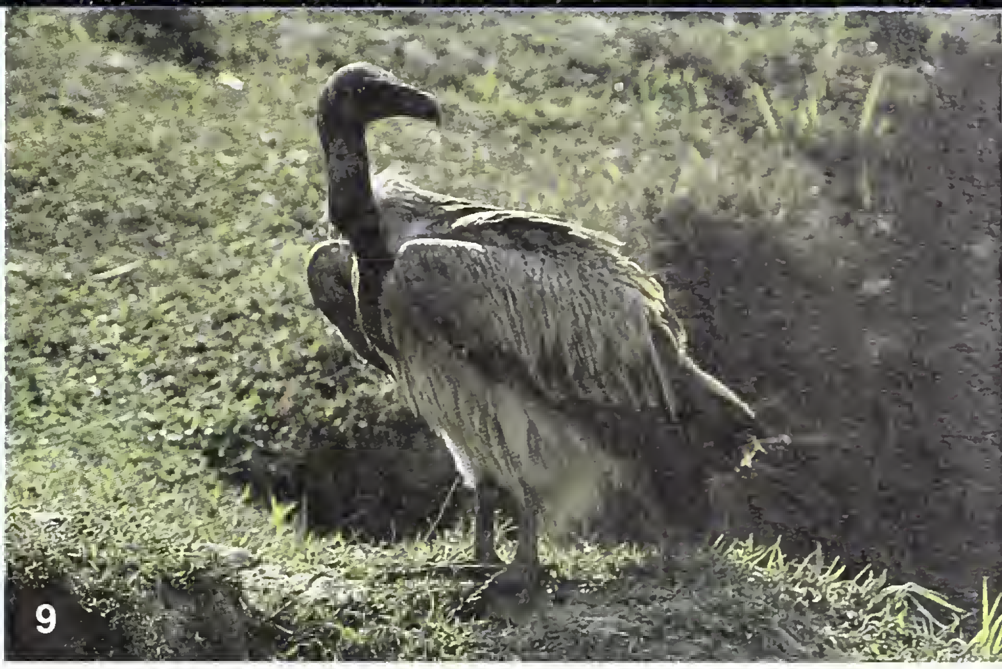
Fig. 5. Juvenile Himalayan Griffon Gyps himalayensis, *Rajasthan, India, December. Note overall dark plumage, with distinct pale streaks to lesser and median coverts and underparts; relatively pale upper mandible; and pinkish-tinged tarsus and toes. (Photo: Bill Clark)*

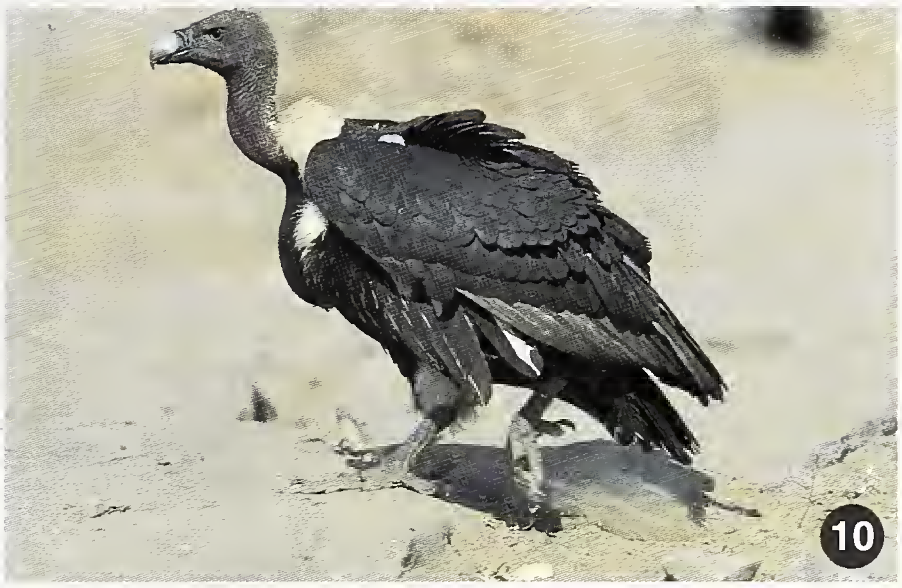
Fig. 6. Juvenile Long-billed Vulture Gyps i. indicus, *Gujarat, India, early August. Note prominent pale streaks to lesser and median coverts; rather pale underside; and pale pinkish culmen (including tip) to upper mandible. (Photo: Arnoud B. van den Berg)*

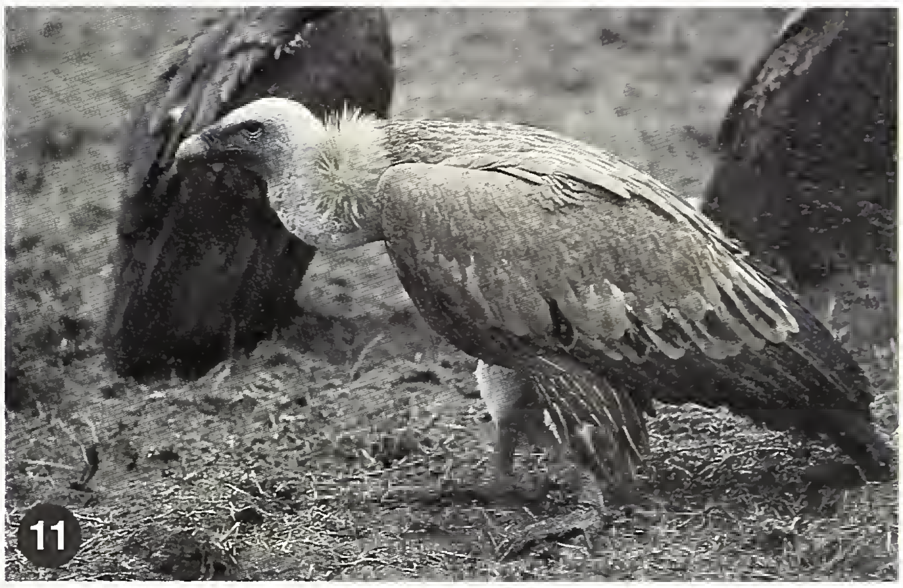
Fig. 7. Young subadult Long-billed Vulture Gyps i. indicus, *Rajasthan, India, early February. Note overall rather pale plumage and colour pattern of bill and cere. (Photo: Göran Ekström)*

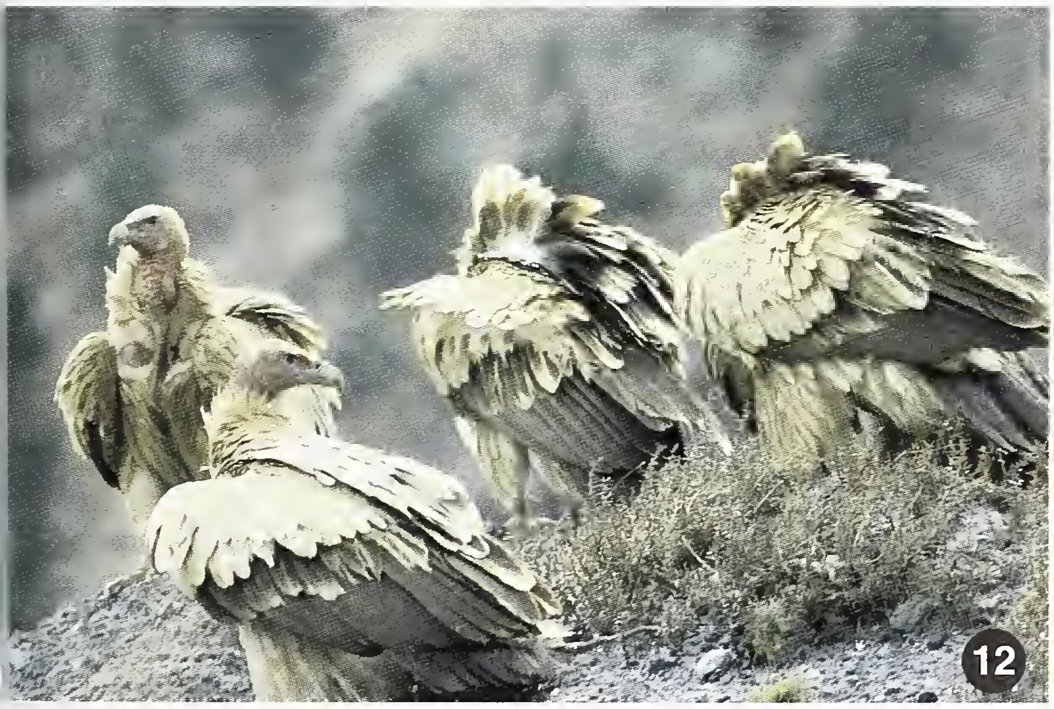
Production of this double colour plate has been sponsored by NHBS











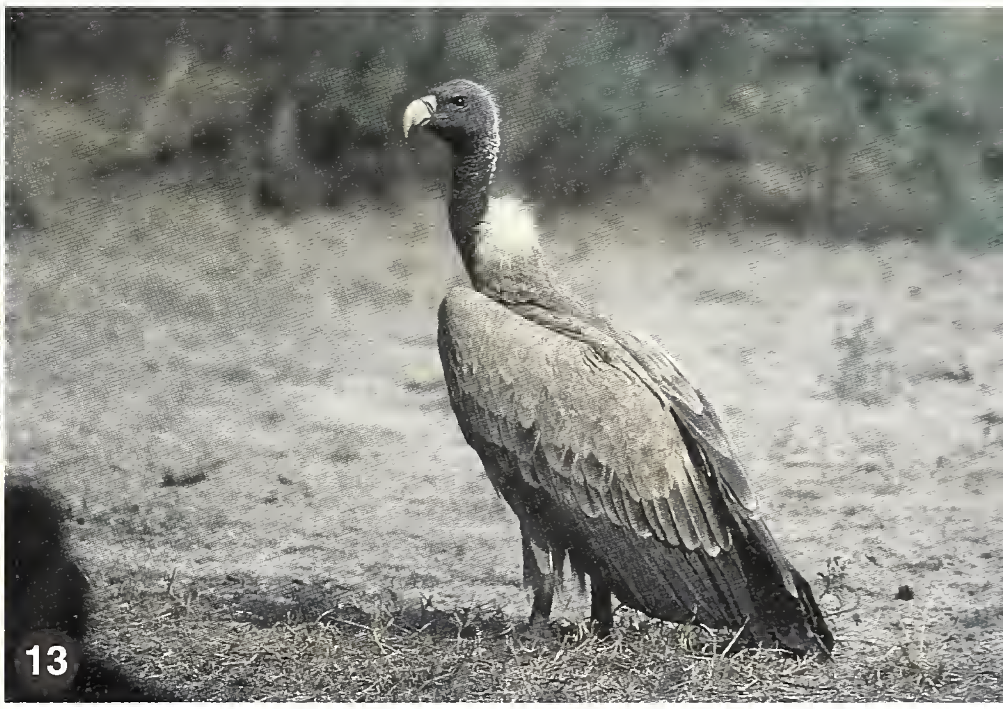


Fig. 8. Juvenile Long-billed Vulture Gyps i. tenuirostris *(top), with juvenile (bottom left) and young subadult (bottom right) White-rumped Vulture* Gyps bengalensis, *NW Uttar Pradesh, India, early February. Note all black bill/cere and head/neck (with very sparse whitish feathers); downy lateral tibia; and darker lesser and median coverts than* indicus. *(Photo: Dan Zetterström)*

Fig. 9. Young subadult Long-billed Vulture Gyps i. tenuirostris, *Assam, mid February. Note overall rather pale plumage; all black head/neck (with very sparse whitish feathers); pale culmen to upper mandible; and downy lateral tibia. (Photo: Anders Paulsrud)*

Fig. 10. Adult White-rumped Vulture Gyps bengalensis, *Rajasthan, India, late January. Maily blackish plumage with whitish ruff and grey secondaries. Note colour pattern of bill and cere. (Photo: Göran Ekström)*

Fig. 11. Old subadult Eurasian Griffon Gyps fulvus, *Rajasthan, India, early February. Note mainly pale yellowish bill (tip dark); blackish cere; mainly whitish head/neck; pale lesser and median coverts and upperside; and rather dark underside. (Photo: Göran Ekström)*

Fig. 12. Adult Himalayan Griffons Gyps himalayensis, *Nepal, February. Note overall pale plumage; pale head/neck; pale bill/cere; and pinkish tarsus/toes. (Photo: Per-Olof Johansson)*

Fig. 13. Adult Long-billed Vulture Gyps i. indicus, *Rajasthan, India, late January. Note nearly all pale bill/cere; blackish head/neck (scant whitish feathers); and pale lesser and median coverts and upperparts. (Photo: Dan Zetterström)*

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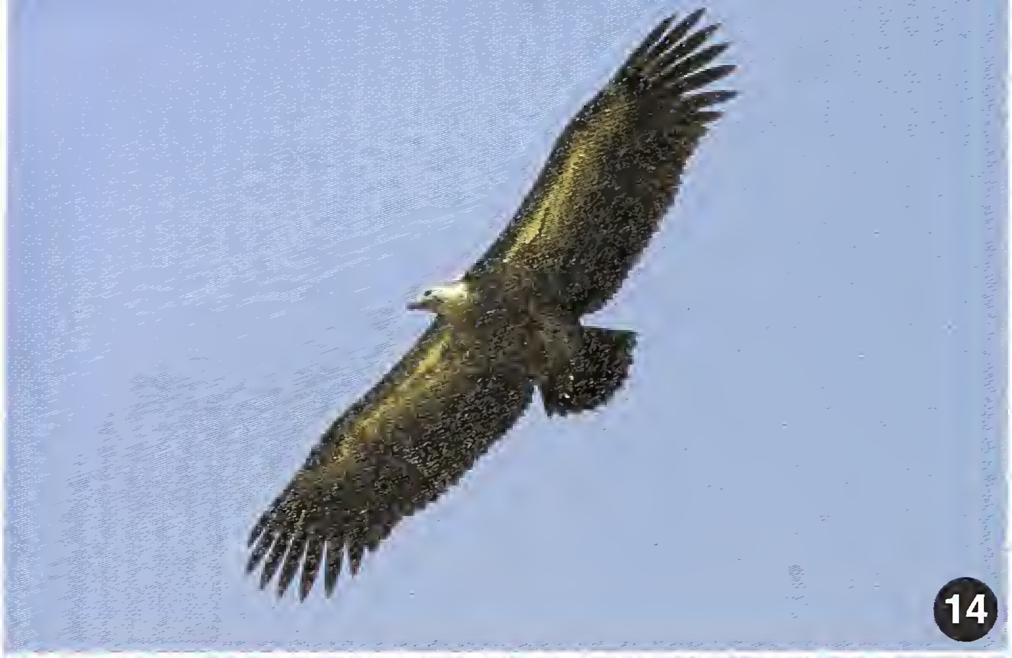
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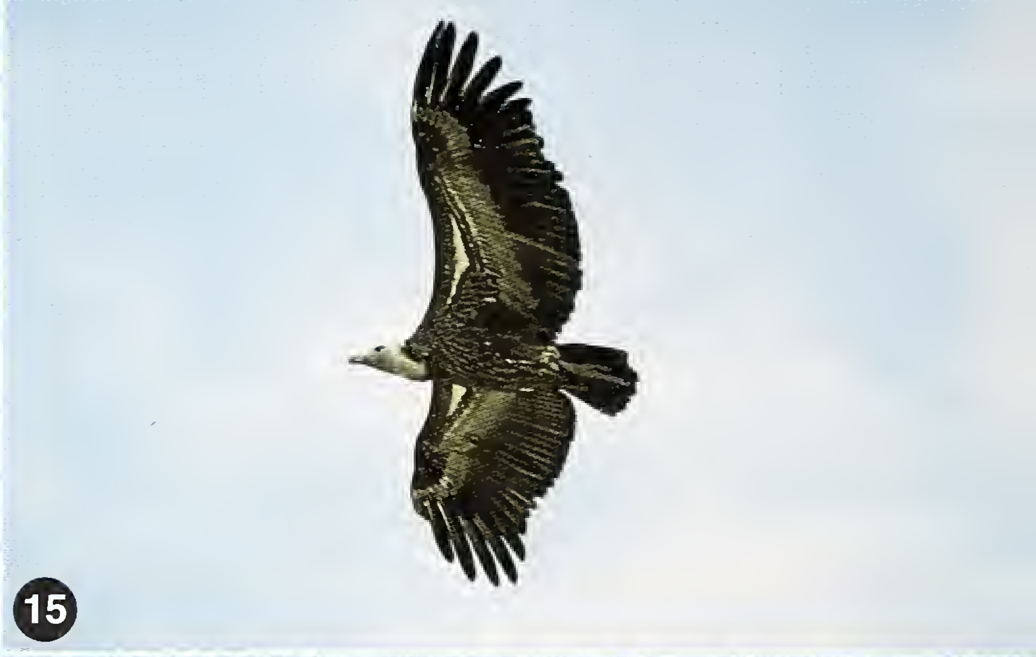
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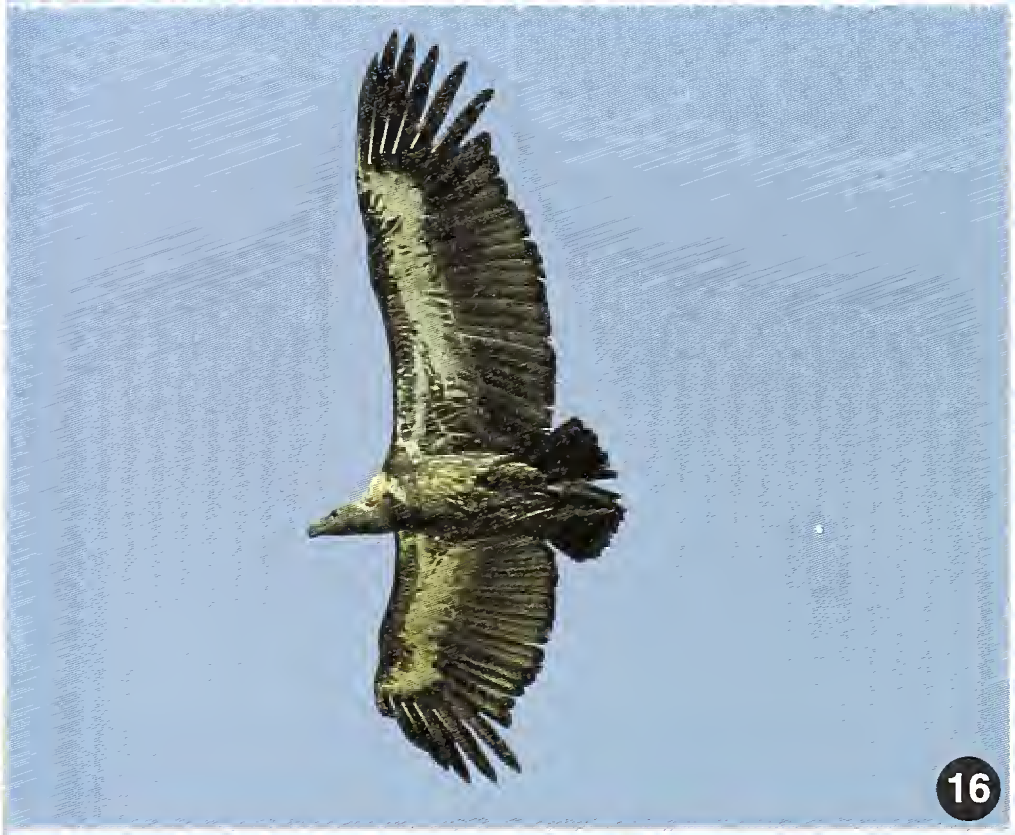
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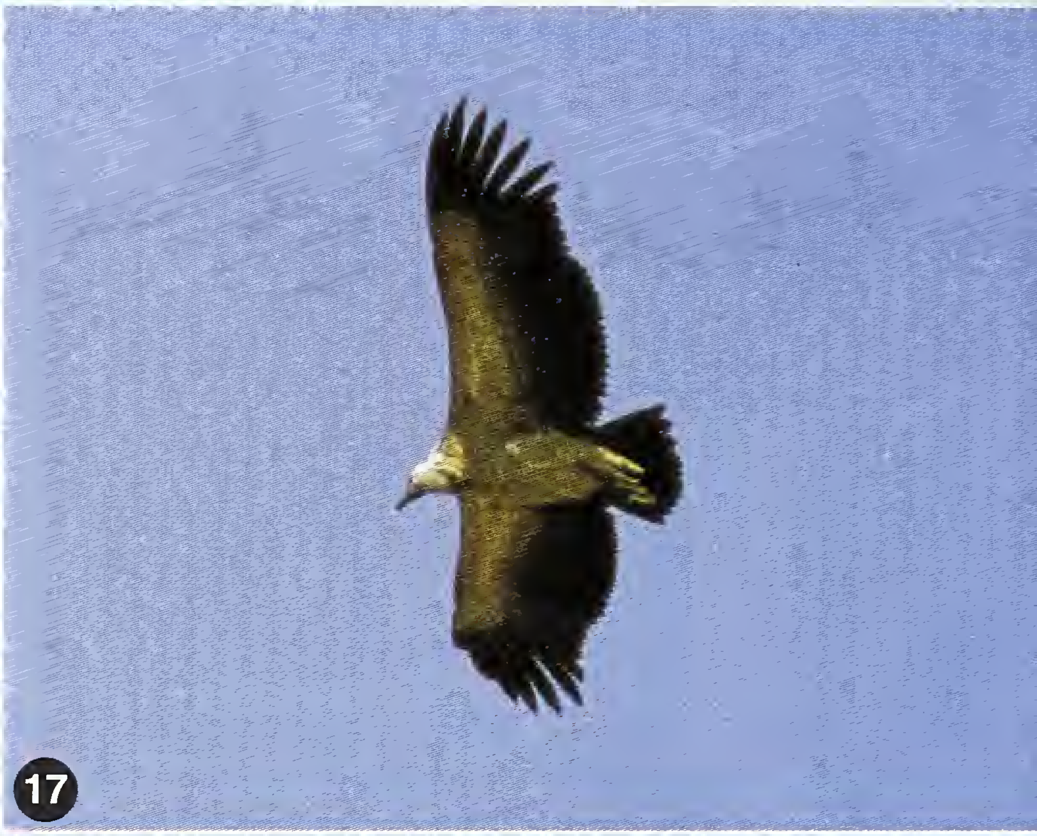
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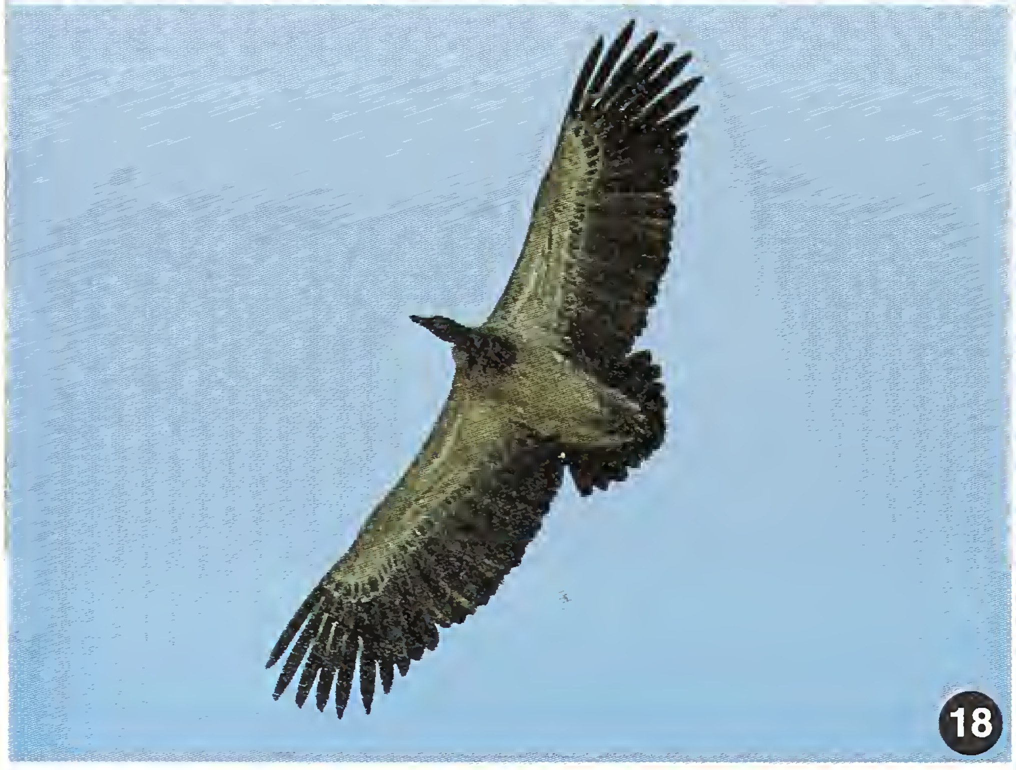
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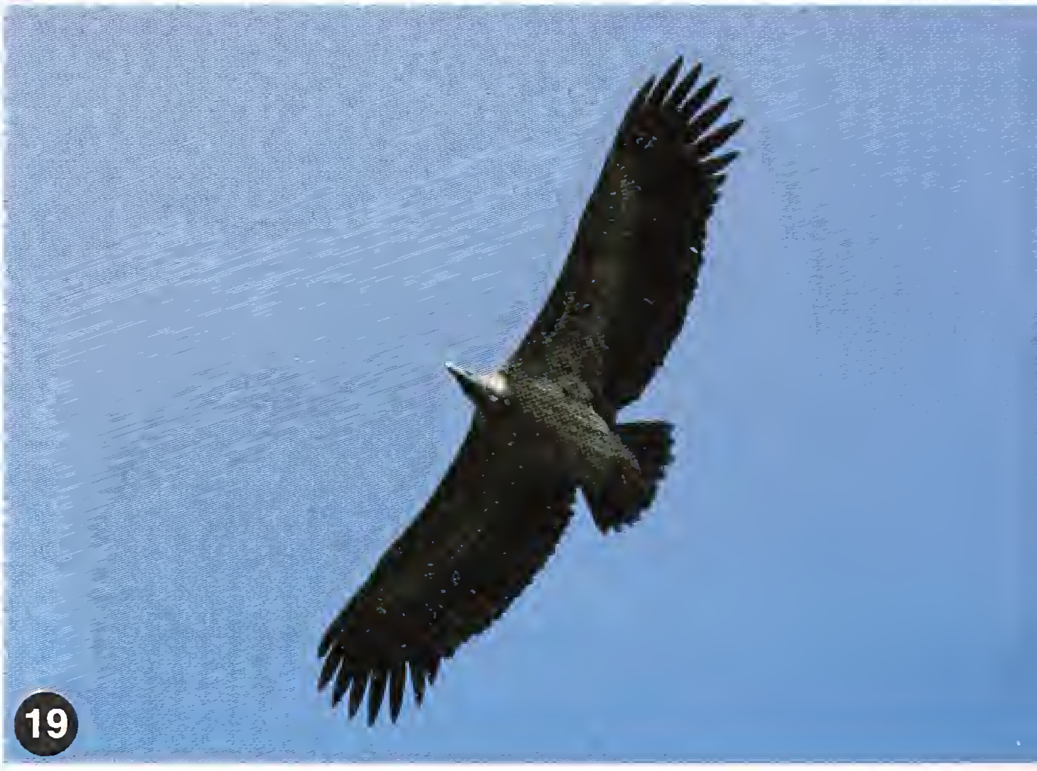
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Fig. 14. Juvenile White-rumped Vulture Gyps bengalensis, *Rajasthan, India, late September. Note overall dark plumage; moderately distinct pale streaks on underparts; and whitish patagial and central bars (latter narrow). (Photo: Arnoud B. van den Berg)*

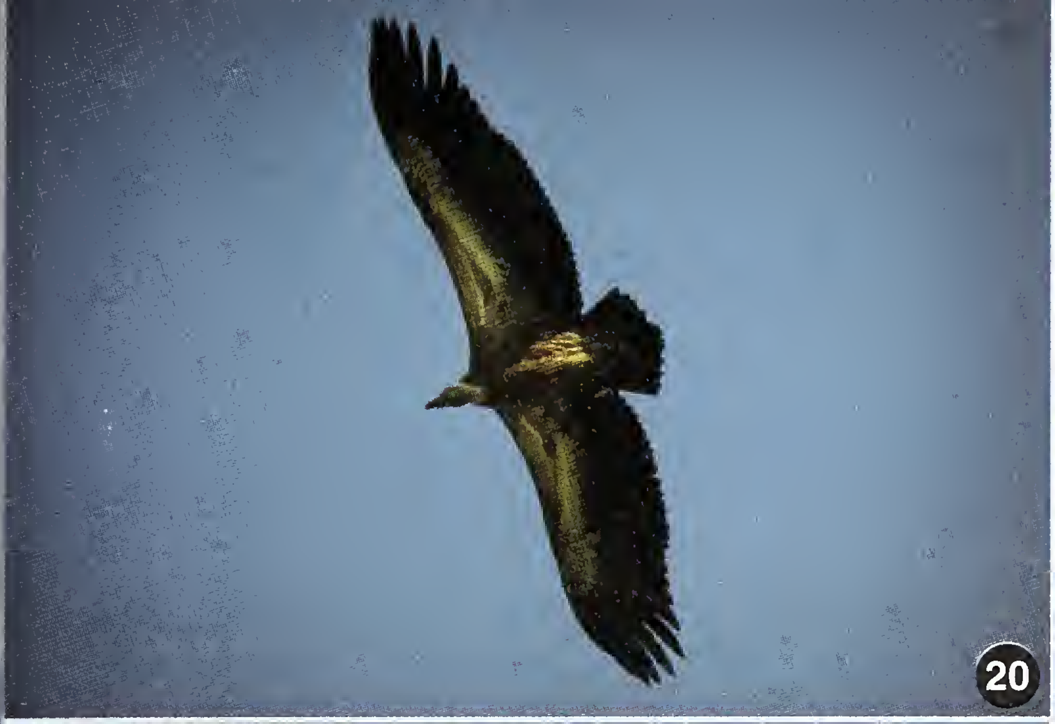
Fig. 15. Young subadult White-rumped Vulture Gyps bengalensis, *Rajasthan, India, January. This individual shows very narrow central bar; contrastingly pale grey greater underwing-coverts and greater under primary coverts (not shown by any other species); and rather distinct whitish streaks on the underparts. (Photo: Markku Huhta-Koivisto)*

Fig. 16. Old subadult White-rumped Vulture Gyps bengalensis, *Rajasthan, India, late January. Note overall very dark plumage with extensively whitish underwing-coverts; dark head/neck; and greyish secondaries with blackish tips. (Photo: Göran Ekström)*

Fig. 17. Juvenile Long-billed Vulture Gyps i. indicus, *Rajasthan, India, late September. Note overall rather pale plumage; broad, pale brown central bar; dark bar on greater underwing-coverts and greater under primary coverts; and pale head/neck. (Photo: Arnoud B. van den Berg)*

Fig. 18. Adult Long-billed Vulture Gyps i. indicus, *Rajasthan, India, late January. Note overall pale plumage; dark bar on greater underwing-coverts and greater under primary coverts; and blackish head/neck. (Photo: Göran Ekström)*

Fig. 19. Adult/old subadult Long-billed Vulture Gyps i. indicus, *Uttar Pradesh, India, December. This individual shows rather dark underwing-coverts, with several indistinct pale bars, and contrastingly pale body. (Photo: Bill Clark)*



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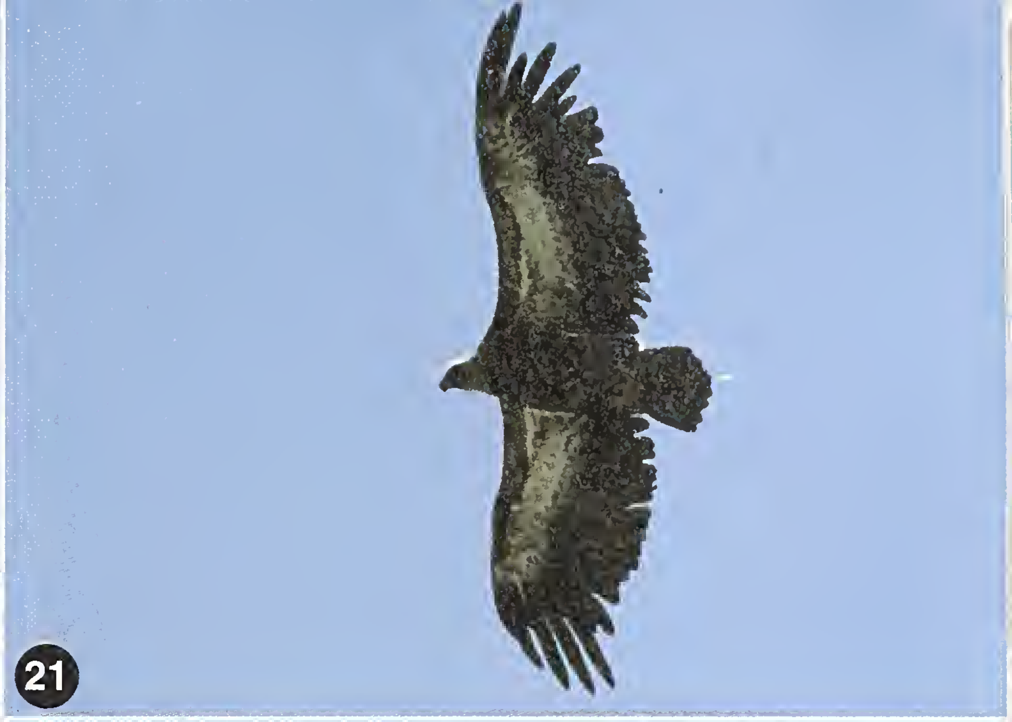

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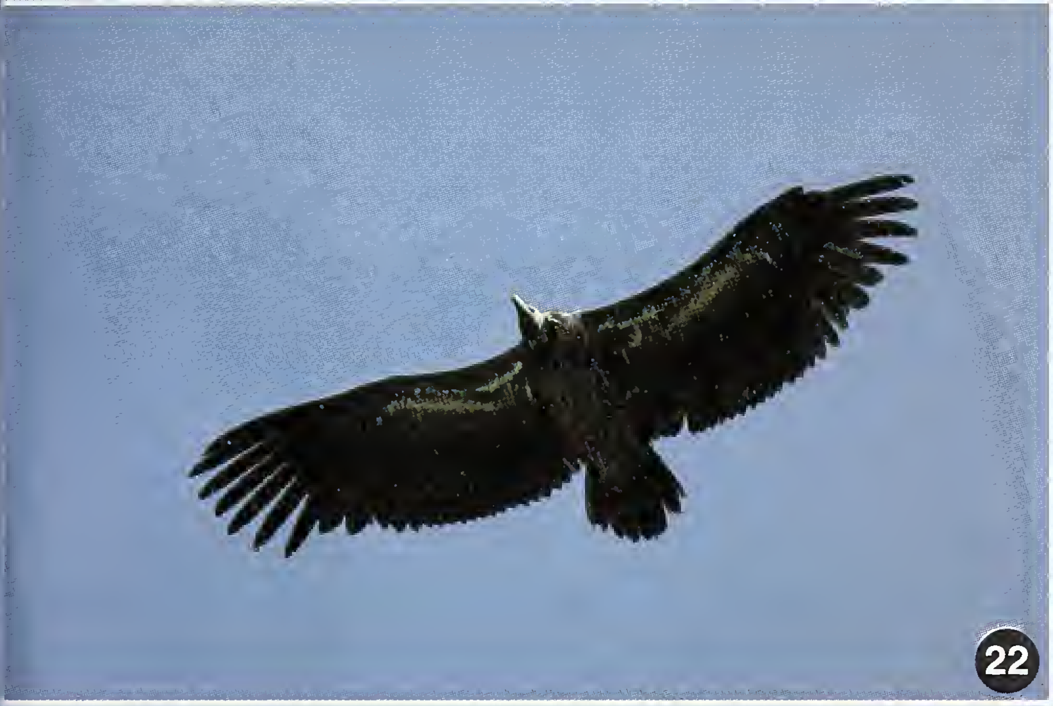

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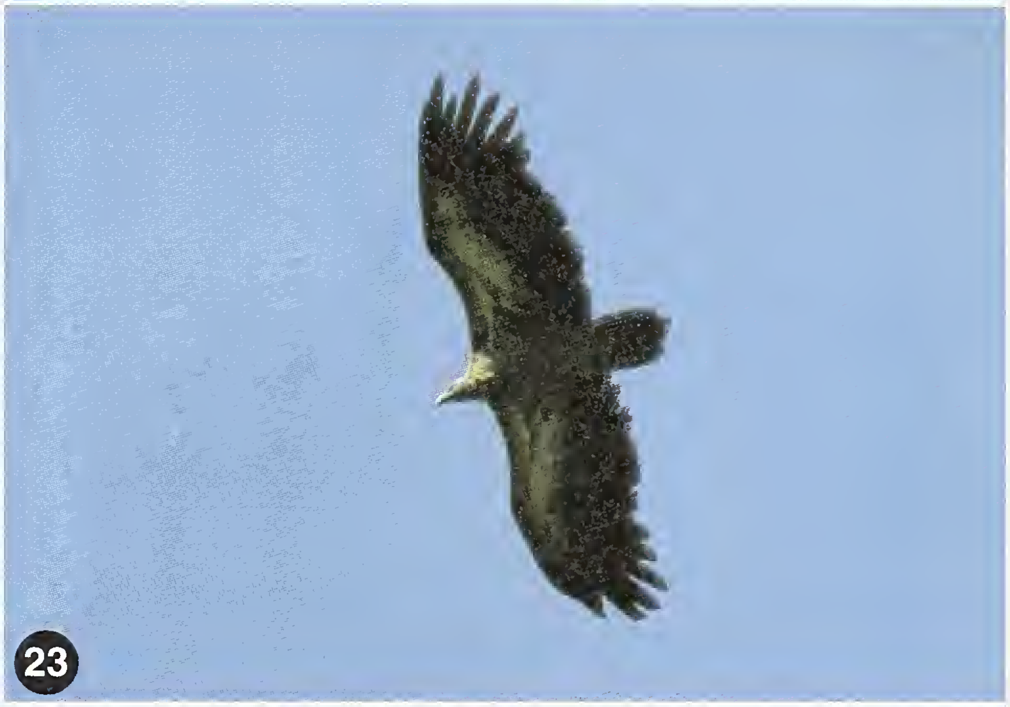

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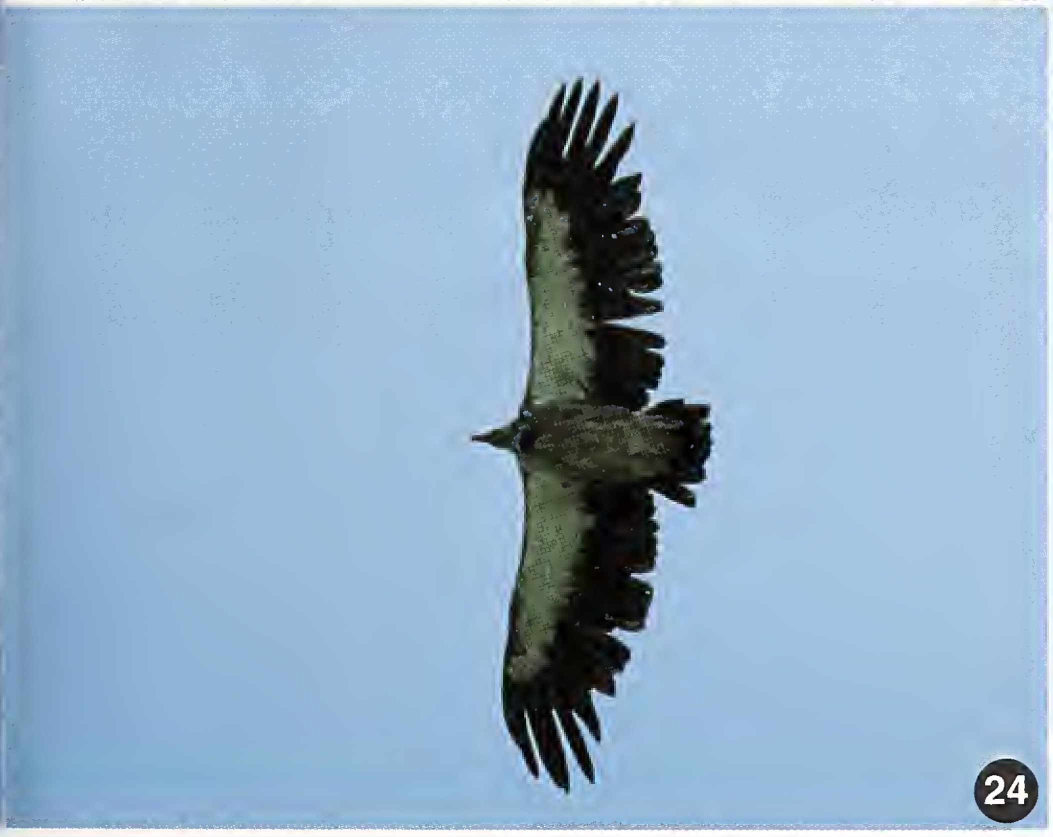

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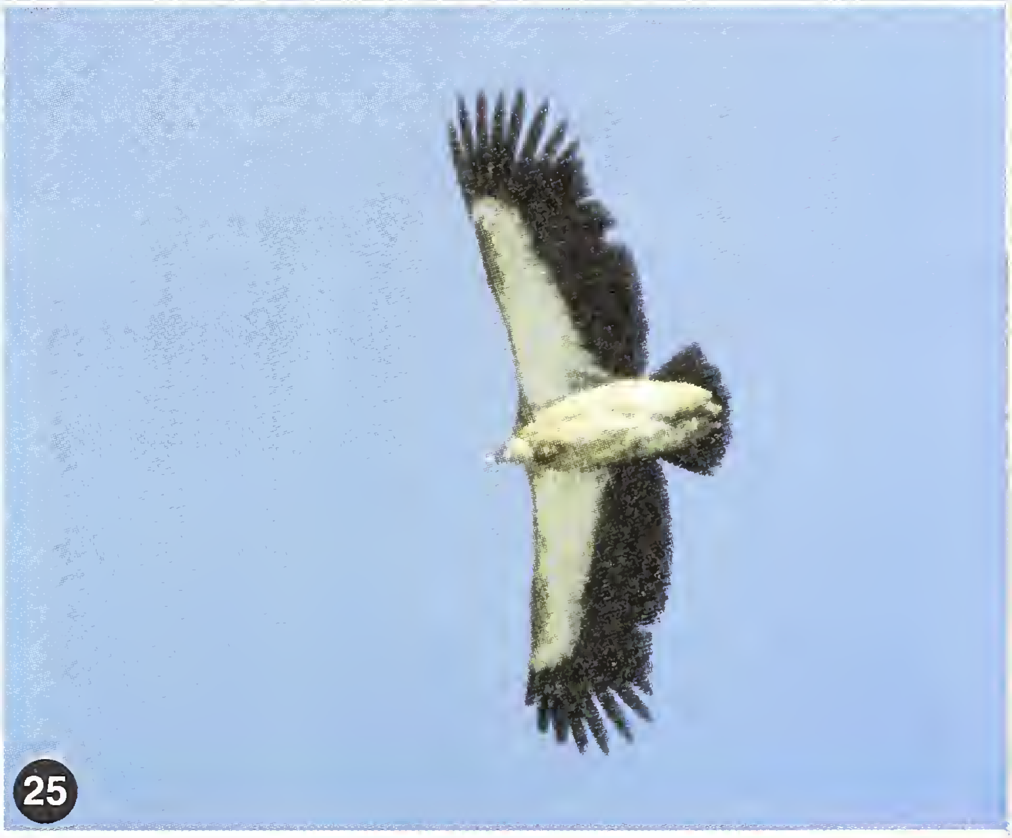

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Fig. 20. Juvenile Eurasian Griffon Gyps fulvus, *Pakistan, February. Note medium dark, rufous-tinged (colour accentuated by morning light) plumage; moderately distinct pale streaking on underparts; prominent, whitish central bar; and dark bar on greater underwing-coverts. (Photo: Björn Johansson)*

Fig. 21. Old subadult Eurasian Griffon Gyps fulvus, *Tajikistan, July. This individual shows unusually broad central bar. Note rather uniformly (not heavily streaked; cf. old subadult Himalayan Griffon), dark brown (not blackish; cf. old subadult White-rumped) underside, and mainly whitish head/neck (dark in old subadult White-rumped). (Photo: Magnus Ullman)*

Fig. 22. First subadult (3rd calendar-year) Himalayan Griffon Gyps himalayensis, *NW Uttar Pradesh, India, late January. Note overall dark plumage with whitish patagial and central bars, and heavily white-streaked underside. (Photo: Dan Zetterström)*

Fig. 23. Young subadult Himalayan Griffon Gyps himalayensis, *Kashmir, India, early May. Note heavily pale-streaked underside. (Photo: Urban Olsson)*

Fig. 24. Old subadult Himalayan Griffon Gyps himalayensis, *Qinghai, China, mid June. Note all-white underwing-coverts/ under primary coverts with dark leading edge, and moderately dark, pale-streaked body. (Photo: Göran Ekström)*

Fig. 25. Adult Himalayan Griffon Gyps himalayensis, *Nepal, April. Note all-white underwing-coverts/under primary coverts with dark leading edge and pale brownish body. (Photo: Urban Olsson)*

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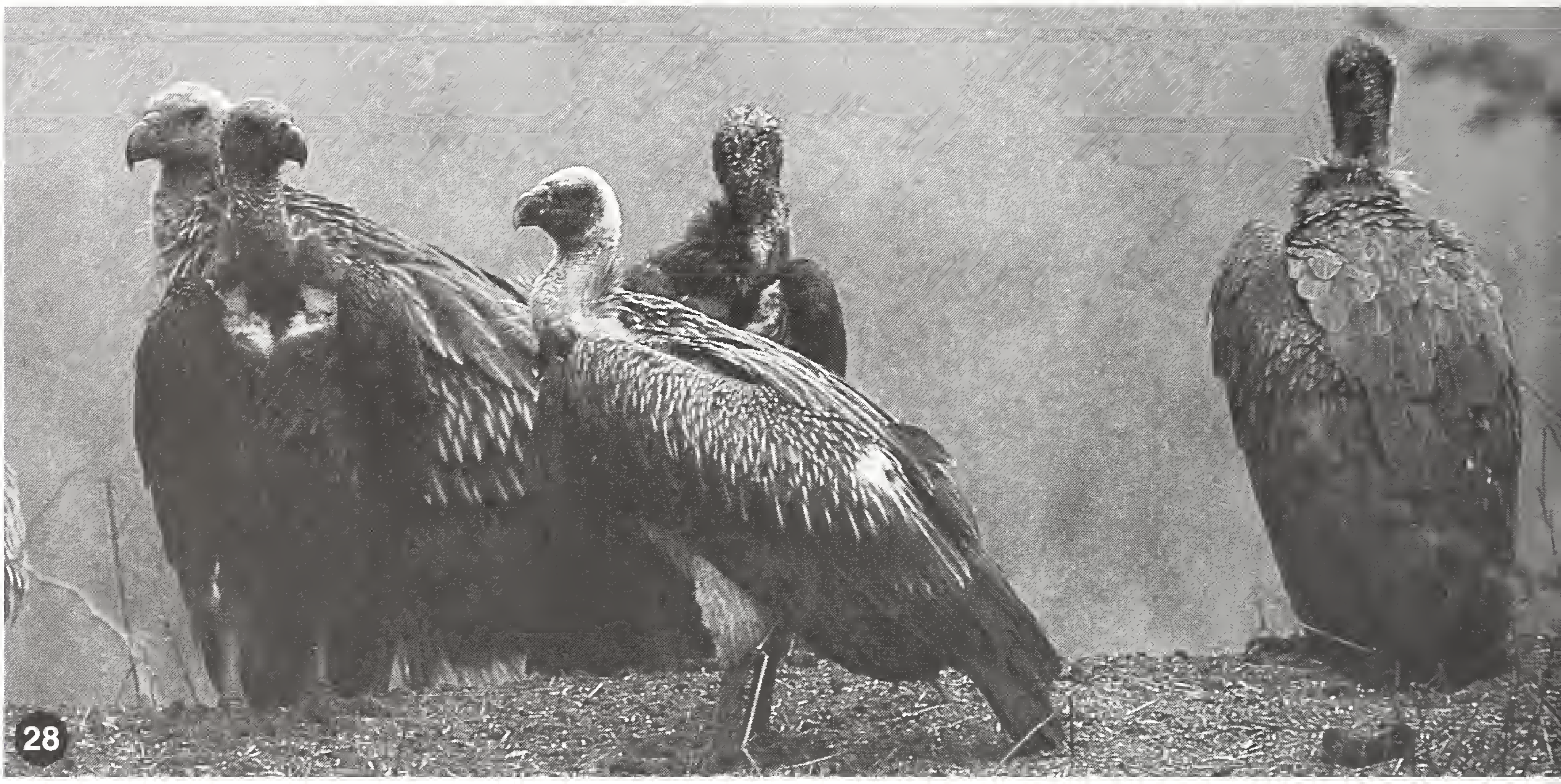

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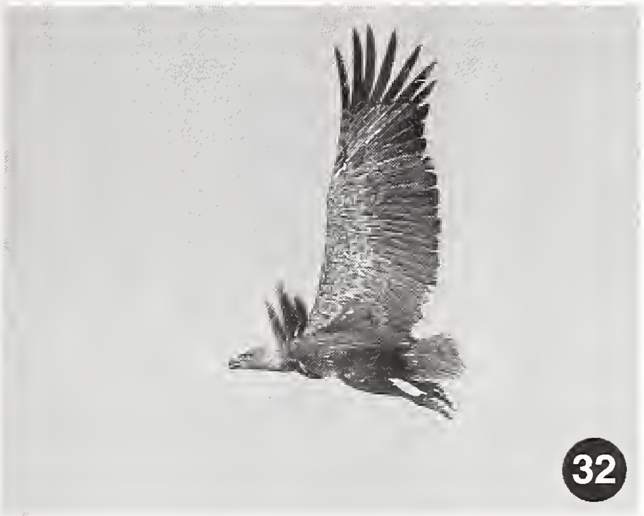

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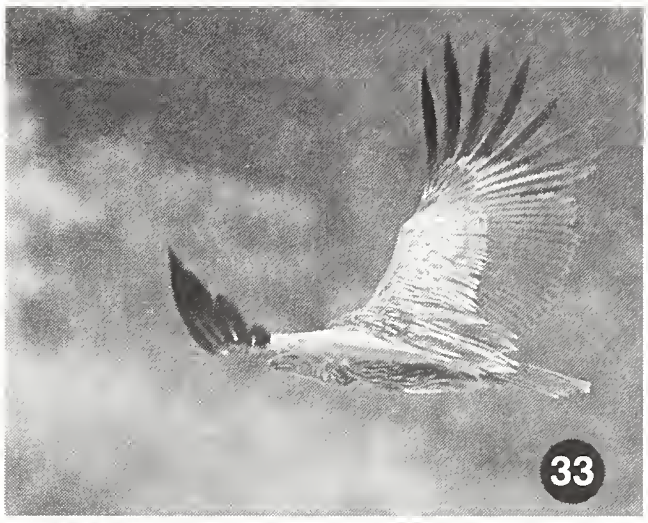

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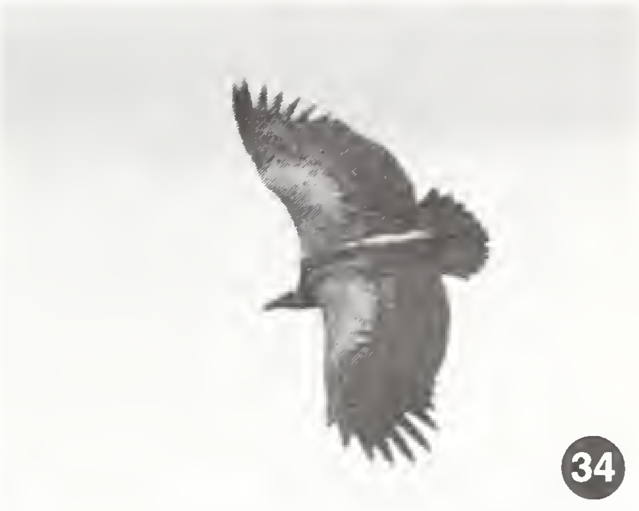

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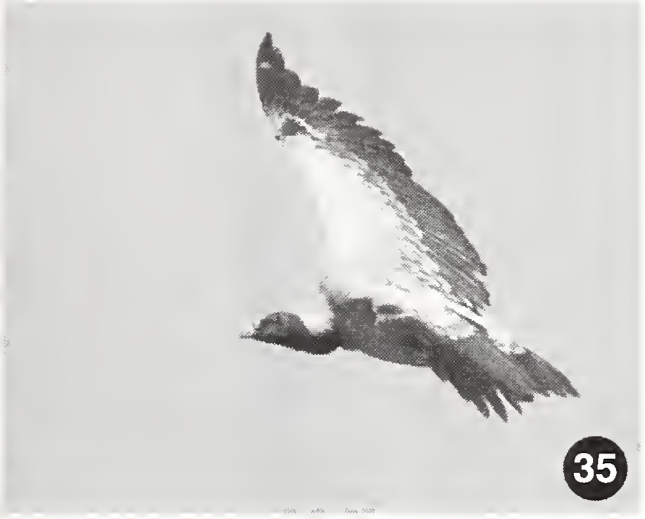

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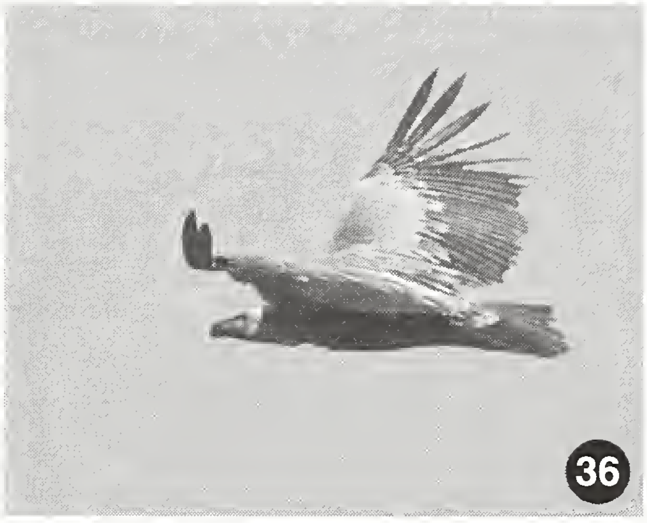

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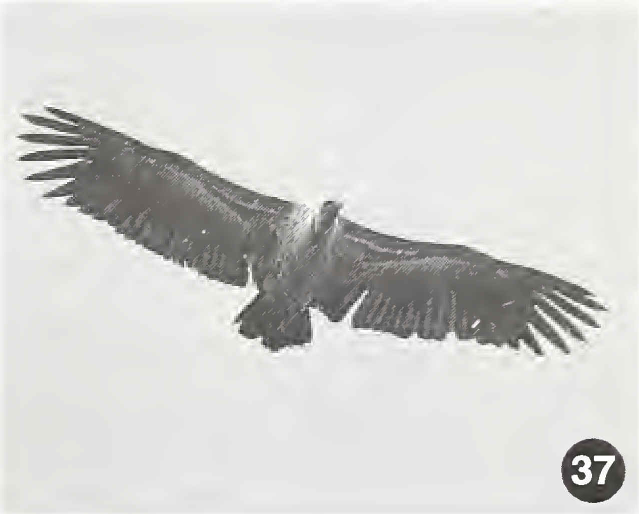

37

Fig. 26. Adult White-rumped Vulture Gyps bengalensis, *Rajasthan, India, late January. Note all-white underwing-coverts/ under primary coverts with dark leading edge and blackish body. (Photo: Göran Ekström)*

Fig. 27. Adult White-rumped Vulture Gyps bengalensis, *Rajasthan, India, late January. Note blackish plumage with grey secondaries and white back/rump. (Photo: Göran Ekström)*

Fig. 28. From left to right: old subadult White-rumped Vulture Gyps bengalensis *(foreground), juvenile Himalayan Griffon* Gyps himalayensis *(background), juvenile Long-billed Vulture* Gyps i. indicus, *old subadult White-rumped Vulture, and young subadult White-rumped Vulture, Rajasthan, India, early February. Cf. especially patterns of upperparts, upperwing-coverts, underparts/lateral tibia, and bills. The Long-billed shows darker than usual lesser and median coverts. (Photo: Göran Ekström)*

Fig. 29. Juvenile Himalayan Griffon Gyps himalayensis *(in background Long-billed Vulture* Gyps i. indicus, *young subadult to the left and juvenile to the right), Rajasthan, India, early February. Note distinct pale streaks to upperparts and lesser and median coverts; dark feathers with narrow pale streaks on lateral tibia; mainly dark bill/cere; and pinkish tarsus/toes. (Photo: Göran Ekström)*

Fig. 30. Young subadult White-rumped Vulture Gyps bengalensis, *Rajasthan, India, late February. Note pale (bluish/ greyish) base to upper mandible and overall rather dark plumage. (Photo: Urban Olsson)*

Fig. 31. Juvenile Long-billed Vulture Gyps i. indicus, *Rajasthan, India, late February. Note pale (pinkish/yellowish) culmen (including tip) and rather pale, broadly and diffusely pale-streaked underside. (Photo: Urban Olsson)*

Fig. 32. Young subadult White-rumped Vulture Gyps bengalensis, *Rajasthan, India, late January. Note relatively dark upperwing-coverts (dark back/rump not visible). (Photo: Göran Ekström)*

Fig. 33. First subadult (3rd calendar-year) Himalayan Griffon Gyps himalayensis, *Uttar Pradesh, India, December. Note moderate contrast between upperwing-coverts (bleached) and remiges, and dark back/rump. (Photo: Bill Clark)*

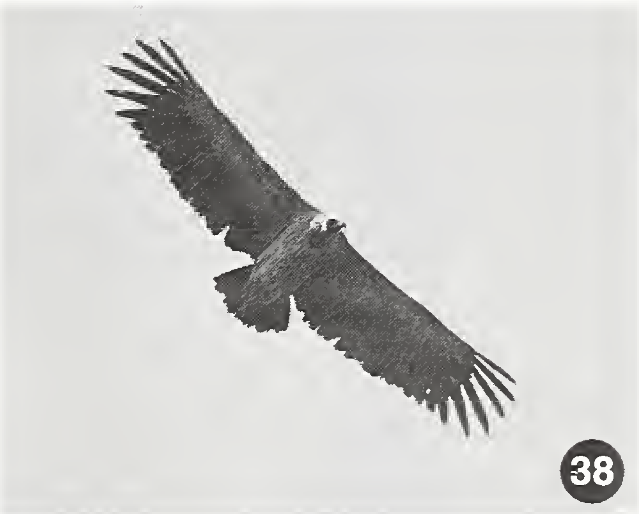

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Fig. 34. Juvenile Long-billed Vulture Gyps i. indicus, *Uttar Pradesh, India, December. Note rather pale lesser and median coverts and white back/rump. (Photo: Bill Clark)*

Fig. 35. Adult Long-billed Vulture Gyps i. indicus, *Uttar Pradesh, India, December. Note very pale lesser and median coverts, white back/rump and blackish head/neck. (Photo: Bill Clark)*

Fig. 36. Young subadult Eurasian Griffon Gyps fulvus, *Rajasthan, India, early February. Note pale, rufous-tinged lesser and median coverts. This individual shows whitish back/rump. (Photo: Göran Ekström)*

Fig. 37. Young subadult White-rumped Vulture Gyps bengalensis, *Rajasthan, India, late January. This individual is exceptionally pale (bleached/worn) on the body. Cf. Long-billed in Fig. 38 and note e.g. darker lesser underwing-coverts/axillaries; whiter central bar, which does not extend onto under median primary coverts; and less 'conspicuous' greater underwing-coverts/greater under primary coverts (indistinctly pale-fringed, forming slightly contrasting dark bar in Long-billed in Fig. 38). (Photo: Dan Zetterström)*

Fig. 38. Young subadult Long-billed Vulture Gyps i. indicus, *Rajasthan, India, late January. Cf. White-rumped in Fig. 37. (Photo: Dan Zetterström)*

SUMMARY OF MOST IMPORTANT CHARACTERS

White-rumped (WRV)		Long-billed (LBV)		Eurasian Griffon (EG)		Himalayan Griffon (HG)	
adult	juv/young subad	adult	juv/young subad	adult	juv/young subad	adult	juv/young subad
Unmistakable. Mostly blackish with slate-grey secondaries.	Overall dark brown. Upperside uniform. Indistinct pale streaks on upperwing-covs. Thin whitish streaks on underside. Bill + cere blackish in juv; top of upper mandible pale bluish-grey basally in young subad (tip always dark). Cf. imm. LBV, EG, HG.	Pale brown upperside, upperwing-covs + underside without distinct pale streaks. Blackish, sparsely feathered head + neck. *tenuirostris*: bill + cere blackish with pale pinkish culmen. Cf. ad EG, HG.+ *indicus*: largely or entirely pale bill (tip always pale) + cere.	Dark brown upperside with distinct whitish streaks. Lesser + med covs pale due to prominent whitish streaks. Underside rather pale; broad, diffuse, pale buffish streaks. *tenuirostris*: blackish, sparsely feathered head + neck; bill + cere all blackish, or with pale culmen (including tip). *indicus*: bill + cere blackish with culmen (including tip) pale pinkish. Cf. imm. WRV, EG, HG.	Uniformly pale rufescent brown upperside + upperwing-covs. Rather dark brown underside, with thin, whitish streaks. Mainly whitish, fully feathered head + neck. Dark grey cere + largely pale yellowish bill, often with dark tip. Cf. ad LBV, HG.	Pale rufescent brown upperside + upperwing-covs, with indistinct pale streaks, especially to latter. Medium dark brown underside, with indistinct, pale streaks. Mainly whitish, rather fully feathered head + neck. Blackish bill + cere, or bill paler on top. Cf. imm WRV, ad EG, HG.	Overall very pale; pale buffy-white or very pale brownish upperside, upperwing-covs + underside. Mainly whitish or buffish-white, rather fully feathered head + neck. Bill and cere pale yellowish, sometimes with some dark at tip. Cf. ad LBV, EG.	Dark brown upperside with distinct whitish streaks. Lesser + med covs rather pale due to prominent whitish streaks. Dark brown underside with rather prominent whitish streaks. Mainly whitish, rather fully feathered head + neck. Bill + cere blackish, or bill medium pale on top. Cf. imm WRV, LBV.

SUMMARY OF MOST IMPORTANT CHARACTERS

In flight

White-rumped (WRV)		Long-billed (LBV)	Eurasian Griffon (EG)	Himalayan Griffon (HG)	
adult	juv/young subad	all plumages	all plumages	adult	juv/young subad
Unmistakable. **Below:** Blackish body, remiges + rectrices, white underwing-coverts with narrow blackish leading edge. **Above:** Contrasting white back and rump. Secondaries + inner primaries slate-grey with blackish tips.	Head/neck pale. **Below:** Rather dark brown lesser underwing-covs and body, especially latter thinly white-streaked. Central bar whitish (often indistinct). Greater underwing-covs uniformly brown-grey. **Above:** Upperwing-covs rather dark brown, contrasting relatively little with remiges (more contrast when wing-covs worn + bleached); indistinct pale streaking. Dark brown back + rump. Cf. EG, LBV, imm HG.	In older subad + ad *indicus* and in all *tenuirostris* blackish head/neck (pale in other plumages). **Below:** Pale brown body. Lesser underwing-covs medium brown, usually darker than body. Central bar same colour as body. Greater underwing-covs often dark grey with pale tips, forming contrasting dark bar. Sometimes underwing-covs uniformly pale brown (same colour as body), or dark brown, darker than body. **Above:** Pale brown upperwing-coverts, contrasting markedly with remiges. Pale, generally whitish, back and rump. Cf. EG, ad HG, imm WRV.	Head/neck pale. **Below:** Medium to dark brown, usually rufous-tinged body + lesser underwing-covs. Usually broad whitish central bar (sometimes including greater underwing-covs). Greater underwing-covs usually blacker than lesser, often showing pale tips and forming a dark bar. Adults often show up to four whitish bands on underwing covs. Thin pale streaks on underside. **Above:** Upperwing-covs pale, contrasting markedly with remiges. Back + rump sometimes contrastingly whitish. Cf. HG, LBV, imm WRV.	Head/neck pale. **Below:** Underwing-covs white with narrow dark leading edge (widest at carpal), generally contrasting with at least slightly darker body. **Above:** Pale buffy-white or very pale brownish upperside + upperwing-covs, strongly contrasting with blackish remiges. Cf. LBV, EG.	Head/neck pale. **Below:** Dark brown underwing-covs and underside of body, especially latter heavily white-streaked. Central bar whitish (often indistinct). Greater underwing-covs uniformly brown-grey. **Above:** Upperwing-covs medium dark, contrasting relatively little with remiges (more contrast when wing-covs worn + bleached); at close range upperside + upperwing-covs prominently pale-streaked. Dark brown back + rump. Cf. LBV, EG, imm WRV.

mantle/scapulars and upperwing-coverts than adult Himalayan Griffon (though may be similar to older subadult Himalayan Griffon), and usually shows more contrastingly pale back and rump (but back and rump sometimes contrastingly whitish in Himalayan Griffon). Also, unlike adult Himalayan Griffon, the median coverts usually show dark bases (though older subadult Himalayan Griffon often show darker bases to the median coverts). Older subadult and adult *indicus* and all *tenuirostris* further differ from Himalayan Griffon by blackish head and neck.

Eurasian Griffon

ADULT PERCHED: The main confusion risk is **adult and older subadult Long-billed Vulture** (see p.38). For differences from **White-rumped Vulture** see p.36.

Adult Eurasian Griffon is easily told from **juvenile and young subadult Himalayan Griffon** by much paler and more uniform mantle, scapulars and lesser and median coverts; broadly pale-tipped greater coverts; overall more rufous-tinged plumage; whitish, fluffy ruff; and paler, yellowish upper mandible.

Easily distinguished from **adult and old subadult Himalayan Griffon** by darker and more rufous-tinged mantle/scapulars and upperwing-coverts, and distinctly darker brown underside, with more contrasting, more clearcut and thinner whitish streaks. Also the cere is always dark grey (pale, generally yellowish in Himalayan Griffon), and the tarsi and toes are medium or dark grey (pale pinkish in Himalayan Griffon).

Similar to some **'semi-old' subadult Himalayan Griffons**, but mantle/scapulars and lesser and median coverts more rufous-tinged and more uniformly coloured (slightly mottled appearance in these Himalayan Griffons due to darker bases of feathers); underside more rufous-tinged and less heavily pale-streaked; and tarsi and toes grey (pale pinkish in Himalayan Griffon).

JUVENILE PERCHED: For differences from **White-rumped Vulture** and **Long-billed Vulture** see p.36 and 38, respectively.

Easily told from **juvenile and young subadult Himalayan Griffons** by much paler, much more uniform and more rufous-tinged mantle/scapulars and lesser and median coverts; and paler, less contrastingly pale-streaked and more rufous-tinged underside. Also, shows medium or dark grey tarsi and toes (pinkish or greyish-pink in Himalayan Griffon).

Easily distinguished from **adult and older subadult Himalayan Griffon** by darker and more rufous-tinged mantle, scapulars and upperwing-coverts; more rufous-tinged and usually darker brown underside with more clearcut, thinner pale streaks; blackish bill and cere; and grey, not pale pinkish, tarsi and toes.

SUBADULT PERCHED: Depending on age, differs from **Himalayan Griffon** by same characters as described under adult or juvenile respectively (see above). For differences from **White-rumped Vulture** and **Long-billed Vulture** see p.36 and 38, respectively.

ALL PLUMAGES IN FLIGHT: For differences from **White-rumped Vulture** and **Long-billed Vulture** see p.37 and39, respectively

All plumages are confusable with **Himalayan Griffon**. The shape tends to be subtly different from that of Himalayan Griffon: the head appears slightly larger, the body less 'barrel-shaped', and the tail slightly shorter. Generally soars on slightly lifted wings (usually rather level wings in Himalayan Griffon). From below easily confused with **juvenile** and particularly **young subadult Himalayan Griffon**. The underside is slightly paler and more rufous-tinged, and shows significantly thinner and less distinct pale streaks than in Himalayan Griffon. The central bar is on average broader and more prominent than in Himalayan Griffon, which never shows a contrasting blackish bar on the greater underwing-coverts. From above easily distinguished from juvenile and young subadult Himalayan Griffon by much paler mantle, scapulars, back, rump, and lesser and median coverts, which contrast significantly with the remiges.

From below easily distinguished from **old subadult and adult Himalayan Griffons** by less extensively white underwing-coverts (in Himalayan Griffon nearly or entirely white with narrow dark leading edge) and by more rufous-tinged and usually darker body. **From above** more closely resembles old subadult and adult Himalayan Griffon, but the mantle, scapulars, back, rump and lesser and median coverts aregenerally slightly darker and more rufous-tinged.

Individuals with much white on the median and greater underwing-coverts (Fig. 21) can be very similar to some **subadult Himalayan Griffons**. **From below** these individuals differ mainly in darker, less heavily pale-streaked and generally more rufous-tinged undersides. They never show as extensively whitish underwing-coverts as old subadult and adult Himalayan Griffons (probably never so extensively white that the patagial bar disappears). **From above** they usually differ from Himalayan Griffon by more rufous-tinged and generally more uniform lesser and median coverts.

Himalayan Griffon

ADULT PERCHED: Not confusable with **White-rumped Vulture**. For differences from **Long-billed Vulture** and **Eurasian Griffon** see p.38 and 48, respectively.

JUVENILE PERCHED: Most similar to juvenile **Long-billed Vulture** (see p.39). Also confusable with juvenile and young subadult **White-rumped Vulture** and **Eurasian Griffon** (see p.36 and 38, respectively).

SUBADULT PERCHED: For differences from **White-rumped Vulture, Long-billed Vulture** and **Eurasian Griffon** see p.36, 39 and 48, respectively.

JUVENILE AND YOUNG SUBADULT IN FLIGHT: Closely resembles juvenile and young subadult **White-rumped Vulture** (see p.37). For differences from **Long-billed Vulture** and **Eurasian Griffon** see p.39 and 48, respectively.

OLDER SUBADULT AND ADULT IN FLIGHT: Main confusion risk is **Long-billed Vulture** (see p.39). Especially some subadults are also confusable with **Eurasian Griffon** (see above).

Acknowledgements

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The Moluccan Scrubfowl *Eulipoa wallacei*

Worldwide there are 22 species of Scrubfowl, found in Papua New Guinea, Australia, Indonesia, the Philippines, the Nicobar Islands and the south-west Pacific. Scrubfowl are the only birds which do not brood their eggs using body heat. Some species use the heat of the sun for incubation, others use volcanic heat or the heat generated by rotting vegetation. Most Scrubfowl are mound builders, building enormous hills which can have a diameter of up to 10m and be 1-2m high. The internal temperature of the mound is regulated by adding, moving or removing sand and vegetation and digging holes. Uniquely, the Moluccan Scrubfowl *Eulipoa wallacei* just digs a hole, throws sand over the egg, then flies off, not even returning to check or regulate the incubation temperature.

During Scrubfowl evolution several special adaptations have occurred to allow for this type of incubation. The eggs are very large and contain almost entirely yolk and have a very thin shell. The embryos have an egg tooth but this is lost before they hatch. The egg is also without an air chamber. The first breath is taken as soon as the shell is broken when the hatchling pushes itself out of the shell and digs its way to the surface. It is not in any hurry, because it still contains a large store of yolk and fat.

Moluccan Scrubfowl Eulipoa wallacei *by Arlene Rosenthal*

Scrubfowl with their strange adaptations are fascinating from an evolutionary point of view. There is a theory that the birds first utilised piles of rotting leaves and holes in rotting trees to incubate their eggs then gradually evolved towards using volcanically warmed ground and warm beaches. Their reproductive strategy can be looked upon as being rather primitive and reptilian but they can also be regarded as progressive, a refinement on birds who sit on nests. However, the birds leave a beach full of holes and a clear indication of where the eggs have been laid: a larder which must and does attract predators like snakes, monitors, cats, pigs, feral dogs and rats. Birds of prey, such as the Brahminy Kite *Haliastur indus*, also await the young as they struggle out of the sand and take a heavy toll of freshly emerged chicks.

In June 1994 we arrived in the small Islamic village of Kailolo on the unspoilt island of Haruku, in order to spend more than a year researching the Moluccan Scrubfowl. Together with Galele (NE Halmahera) Haruku is probably the last big breeding colony of this species in the world.

The Moluccan Scrubfowl lives in the impenetrable tropical rainforest on the mountain slopes of Haruku and the surrounding islands. Little is known about its breeding behaviour and the literature only mentions occasional incidental observations of the bird in its natural habitat. On Haruku we tried to gather as much information as possible on this unique bird, about which so little is known. We hoped that this knowledge might be of help to enable us to re-introduce the Moluccan Scrubfowl to areas where it has disappeared.

Nesting grounds are found about 100m in from the coast and there were five such areas in our study site. When a female is ready to lay she makes a night flight to her laying place, usually a warm beach by day, sometimes having to cross the sea to reach it. Exactly where these birds come from is not exactly known. Once she arrives at the site she rests in the crown of a tree looking for a suitable place to lay.

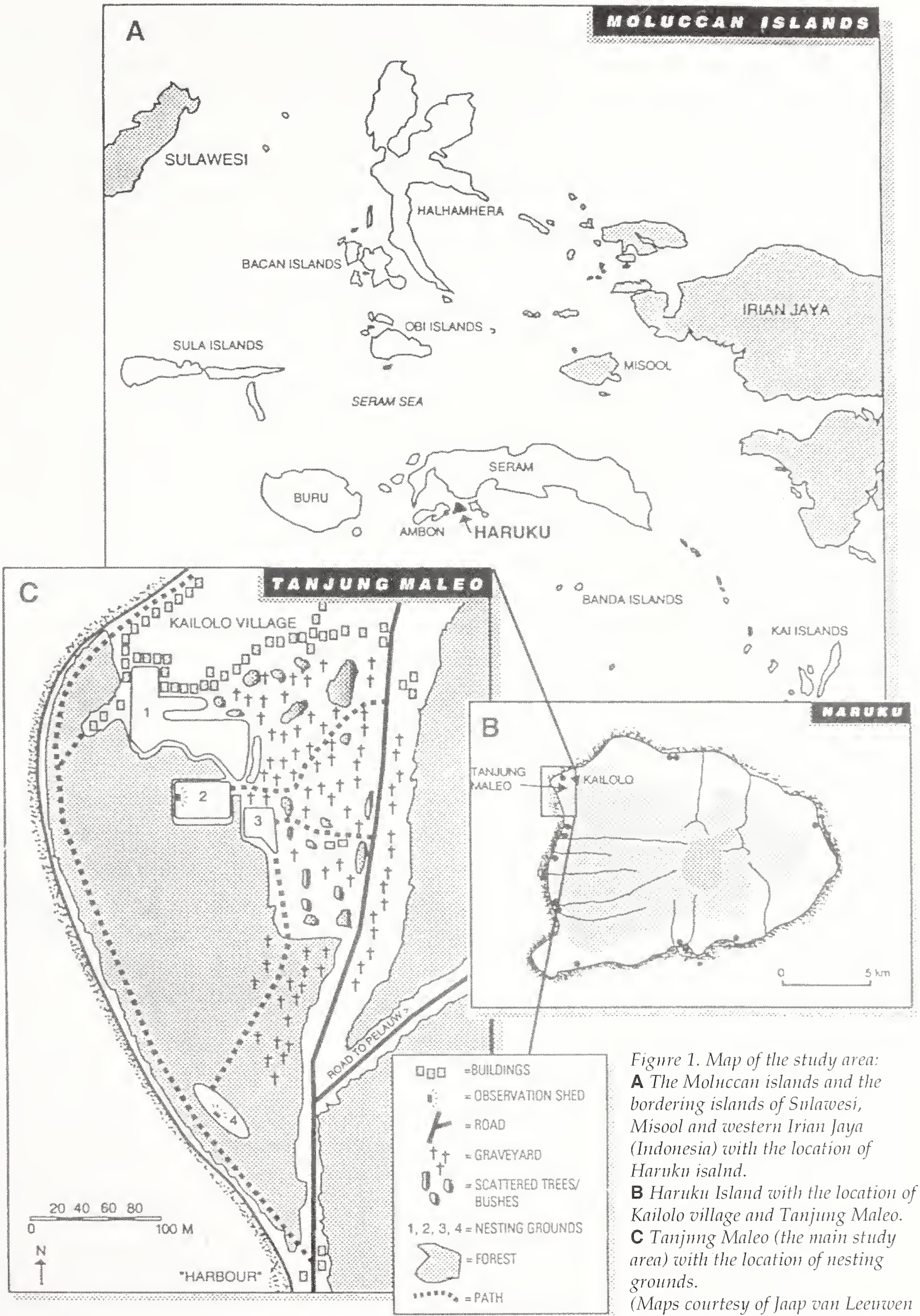


Figure 1. Map of the study area:
A *The Moluccan islands and the bordering islands of Sulawesi, Misool and western Irian Jaya (Indonesia) with the location of Haruku isalnd.*
B *Haruku Island with the location of Kailolo village and Tanjung Maleo.*
C *Tanjung Maleo (the main study area) with the location of nesting grounds.*
(Maps courtesy of Jaap van Leeuwen Design)

At night, preferably around the time of the full moon, she digs a hole nearly a metre deep, lays a single large salmon-coloured egg in the hole, and covers it up and leaves it to fate. The egg contains mainly yolk and is hatched by the heat of the sun. The eggs weigh an average of 103g, (which is very heavy considering that the adult bird only weighs about 500g *i.e.* about 20% of body weight), and resemble goose eggs. When the eggs hatch the chicks dig their way to the surface and immediately scurry into the forest. They are completely developed and independent: the Scrubfowl does not 'parent' its young in any way. Exactly where the young go after hatching is not known.

Each year the village chief of Kailolo puts the rights to search in a particular area up for auction and the successful candidate employs villagers to guard and excavate the eggs. Some of the eggs are for personal consumption and the rest are sold, providing a small income for the villagers. There is also a small income from the eco-tourists who visit the nesting grounds each year.

During the dry monsoon, as many as 200 eggs a day can be collected by local villagers, a process which inevitably also uncovers young chicks. Although it is very difficult to re-bury any chicks accidentally dug up in the search for eggs, this is the chick's only chance for survival. Once collected the eggs are cooked by local villagers, the flavour being reminiscent of goose eggs.

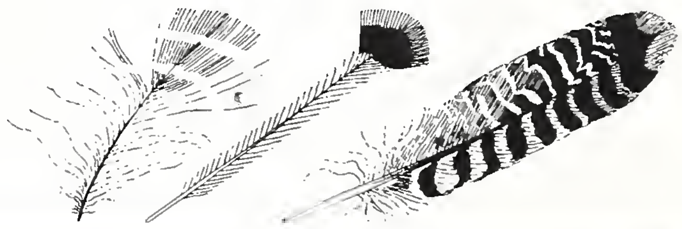
When I asked the winner of the auction whether he would earn enough money from selling eggs one year, he replied that the higher the price, the more eggs the birds lay. Asked if the birds would not be angry at having to lay ever more eggs, he answered that it is Allah's responsibility to ensure that the birds would lay more and that Allah would help him since 75% of his proceeds go to the local Mosque.

In addition to observation of the nesting grounds and investigation of the egg harvesting, I also searched for other nesting places on Haruku and other Moluccan islands, including Seram, Halmahera and Buru. The Moluccan Scrubfowl has now become so scarce that mapping its exact present habitat and range is of great importance in conserving the species. Its disappearance in other parts of the Moluccas is a serious problem. Cutting down of the rainforest and new settlers who know nothing about sustainable harvesting from the forest are the major threats facing these birds. The eggs have been over-collected, without any restrictions being imposed, and the birds themselves are shot for food.

Acknowledgement
Throughout the study Dr Heij was working with the cooperation of staff at the University of Bogor.

Dr C.J. Heij and Dr Christny F.E. Rompas

Stray feathers



Formation of Bird Link for South Asia

Following the success of Tiger Link and Toxic Link, the Bird Link Society was formed in January 1997 as a society linking persons and organisations concerned with the conservation of birds and their habitat in South Asia. Bird Link will be a mechanism for field activity, and is about creating linkages between different sectors for conservation action - research institutes, legal aid agencies, anti-poaching and wildlife trade specialists, media action groups, financial aid agencies and others. This Bird Link support structure will be for the better facilitation of field action, be it by an individual, NGO or government. Bird Link aims to work towards a collective action plan with a long-term vision. Bird Link would be a common platform for the dissemination of research, it will unite individuals and organisations working towards protecting birds and their habitat, and play an effective role in developing strategies and methodologies for action. The priority remains 'saving birds and their habitat'.

The primary goals of Bird Link will be: To unite, coordinate, network and exchange data and information regarding birds of South Asia and their habitat. To become an effective pressure group to prevent the threat of extinction of bird species and their habitat. The collective will of Bird Link will unite all organisations and concerned persons in order to initiate immediate action on several different levels. To create an awareness amongst students and the community at large that the protection of birds and their habitat is ultimately linked to the preservation of the entire ecosystem.

Bird Link is concerned about: Poaching of birds, habitat degradation and other pressures which cause fragmentation and field problems which do not appear to have a mechanism for redress. Pressure on the habitat is also exerted by commercial exploitation and big development projects, be it mining or hydroelectric dams, as well as urban and rural demand for natural resources. The alienation of local communities from Park management has added to the gloom. Effective policies to tackle this issue have suffered due to slow bureaucratic procedures and general apathy in the field. The problems that confront the forest department staff at different levels are wide-ranging: low morale and lack of resources, adequate training, welfare schemes, awards, incentives *etc*. It is with all these issues in mind that a coordinated action group, Bird Link, has been formed

Let every committed organisation and individual participate in Bird Link. Let it be devoid of self interest and rivalry. Let it prioritise the conservation of birds and the prevention of the abuse of their habitat. Let Bird Link evolve strategies to act as a strong, united pressure group to compel politicians and the bureaucracy to take immediate and effective action for the protection of birds. On occasion it may be necessary to take responsibilities and risks and not just be dependent on the government for action and implementation.

Aims of Bird Link

1. **To make Bird Link a dynamic and effective forum**. This forum has been created to save birds and protect their habitat. It will act on all bird related issues, be it poaching, disruption of bird habitat, big development projects, contradictory Central and State government policies and people related issues.
2. **People and Bird habitat: Eco-development and Protected Areas**. Although bird survival is the priority here, it is linked to the involvement of local communities who have lived in natural regions for thousands of years. Many facets of this equation are still hotly debated, without having reached conclusive solutions. The aim will be to prioritise the terms of this ongoing debate and the conflicting stands from the point of view of the urgency and the necessity of the conservation of bird species.
3. **Research, monitoring and data collection**. The scientific institutions that participate in Bird Link will prioritise which information and research work are essential for the survival and conservation of birds and their habitat. This information will then be disseminated to others through Bird Link.
4. **The Control of Poaching and Trade**. Plundering of the forests for the illegal wildlife trade and poaching is critically endangering birds, other wildlife as well as their habitat. Efforts will be made to monitor illegal activities and bring about the control of these criminal acts.
5. **Awareness, Media campaigns**. Journalists and other media participants of Bird Link will be encouraged effectively to take up the cause on TV, radio, newspapers *etc*., for the conservation of birds.
6. **Education**. It will be a priority for Bird Link to hold art and photography exhibitions related to birds. Field trips to forests, parks and sanctuaries are also essential. We hope to involve children and emphasise the importance of bird conservation as a link to conservation at large. Bird Link will develop educational material and awareness programmes for schools and colleges.
7. **Legal Action**. Lawyers that are committed to the protection of birds will be encouraged to explore the existing legal regulations and illustrate how legal protection for birds can be

strengthened and legislated.

8. **Tourism**. The Indian region is incredibly rich in bird life and bird tourism increases every year. Birdwatching is a way not only of learning about birds, but a channel for studying the natural world as a whole. Bird tourism will be analysed to find ways of turning this into a constructive force.
9. **Networking**. Bird Link will publish a newsletter twice a year that consolidates the networking, information, research and documentation regarding birds and their habitat in South Asia.
10. **Awards**. Bird Link will sponsor awards to individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the study or conservation of birds and their habitat.

Help us by joining Bird Link and sending us information as well as suggestions. If you have any friends or know of any organisations that would be interested in Bird Link, please let us know. We hope to send you the first Bird Link newsletter by August 1997. There is no membership fee for Bird Link. For information and assistance please contact Bikram Grewal, 101/4 Kaushalya Park, Hauz Khas, New Delhi 110016. E-mail: biks@giasdl01.vsnl.net.in. Tel. 6961520, 660607.

WPSI Annual Bird Conservation Award

The Wildlife Protection Society India (WPSI) Annual Bird Conservation Award is sponsored by the Edgeworth India Trust. The Award will be given to individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the study or conservation of birds or their habitat in India and Nepal, beyond or above the call of duty. Three awards of Rs10,000 each and a certificate will be given annually. In exceptional cases a Special Award category of Rs20,000 will be conferred. A jury consisting of Mr Bikram Grewal, Mr Bittu Sahgal and Ms Belinda Wright will select the recipients. It is requested that anyone sending in nominations should include the following information:

1. Name and permanent address of proposed recipient.
2. Age, position and official address of proposed recipient.
3. Describe in detail the reasons for meriting the nomination.
4. How long have you known the proposed recipient and assessed his/her work?
5. Name and full address of nominating person/agency.

Nominations should be sent to Bikram Grewal, 101/4 Kaushalya Park, Hauz Khas, New Delhi 110016, India.

Request for information from OBC members visiting Vietnam

There are now increasing numbers of OBC members visiting Vietnam and the BirdLife Vietnam Programme would like to hear from you! The BirdLife Vietnam Programme currently implements a range of projects, including the Asian Bird Red Data Book project. Please do your best to send us your records of red data book species and all other interesting observations. Trip lists are also particularly welcome. Please address correspondence relating to red data book species to Dr Nguyen Cu, BirdLife Vietnam Programme, 293B Tay Son, Dong Da, Hanoi, Vietnam.

Orange-necked Partridge Survey - request for information

A team of students form the University of Amsterdam, Cat Tien National Park and the Institute for Ecology in Saigon are currently undertaking a survey of the Orange-necked Partridge *Arborophila davidi* in Cat Tien National Park and Cat Loc Nature Reserves. The team's work is being coordinated in Vietnam and partially funded by the BirdLife Vietnam Programme. The BirdLife Vietnam Programme would be interested to learn of any sightings made of this species, by OBC members at these or other sites in Vietnam. Details of records should be sent to the BirdLife Vietnam Programme, 293B Tay Son, Dong Da, Hanoi. Contributing members will be fully acknowledged for any details they provide.

Cuckoos and Turacos

Johannes Erritzoe and Richard Fuller are working on a new monograph, *'Cuckoos and Turacos of the world'* (including Anis, Roadrunners, Couas and Coucals). Colour plates will depict each species and a bibliography of the group will be compiled. An inventory, in electronic format, of museum holdings of type specimens and study skins will be released with the work.

The authors would welcome any published or unpublished information, trip reports or field observations of *e.g.* habitat preferences, identification tips, vagrancy, mortality, vocalisations, breeding records, descriptions of parasitic behaviour, eggs, nests and nest sites, information on juvenile plumages, behaviour and diet. Particularly useful is information on the current status of cuckoo populations throughout the world and threats to their continued survival. Details of captive birds are also welcome.

Photographs loaned for reference will be returned in due course and all contributions will be gratefully acknowledged in the work. Please send any information to: Johannes Erritzoe, Taps Old Rectory, House of Bird Research, DK-6070 Christiansfeld, Denmark (fax +45 75 57 32 55; email erritzoe@cybernet.dk) or to Richard Fuller, 33 Plough Road, Epsom, Surrey, UK, KT19 9RA; email fuller02@premier.co.uk

Bird Lore and Bird Mythology

Mark Cocker is currently collecting information for a book on the mythology and lore associated with birds from around the world. He is interested in the cultural associations that birds have acquired both in an historical and contemporary context and is especially keen to gather information on the significance birds have had for pre-industrial peoples. He is interested in examining the cultural importance and exploitation of birds. Two examples are the pre-Columbian Aztec feather art and use of birds-of-paradise feathers in ceremonial dress in New Guinea. Any data on these themes would be very gratefully received and fully acknowledged in any publication. Please Contact: Mark Cocker, 9 Primrose Road, Thorpe Hamlet, Norwich NR1 4AT, UK. Tel/fax +44 (0) 1603 611797.

Java and Bali Birds - Final request for information

In connection with the publication of a checklist of the birds of Java and Bali (see OBC Bulletin 23, page 42), to be published as a part of the series of British Ornithologists' Union checklists, it can be added that the preparation will be done in cooperation with Bas van Balen, BirdLife International, Indonesia Programme. Therefore any information can also be sent to Bas van Balen, BirdLife International, P.O.Box 310/Boo, Bogor 16003, Indonesia.

Information on Weavers needed

Professor Adrian Craig is working on a review of yellow weavers of the genus *Ploceus* and would appreciate any information that can be supplied on them. He is especially interested in any new biological data (breeding, feeding, general behaviour) as well as details from birds handled (sex/age criteria, weights, measurements). Any information will be fully acknowledged and he is happy to provide comparative data on other species in return. Please contact Professor Adrian Craig, Dept of Zoology and Entomology, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, 6140, South Africa. Tel. 27 461 318533. Fax: 27 461 24377. Email: zoac@hippo.ru.ac.za

Tapes of *Zoothera* Thrush songs wanted.

Pete Clement, for his book on Thrushes, is looking for tape recordings of all *Zoothera* Thrush species in Asia. Particularly required are tapes of songs of the Scaly Thrush complex, especially those from the Indian Subcontinent and Sri Lanka. The latter are urgently required for a paper about this species complex to appear in the forthcoming Sri Lanka Special Bulletin. Please send all material to Pete Clement, 69 Harecroft Road, Wisbech, Cambs PE13 1RL, UK.

Eco-shop at Periyar

Birders visiting the Periyar Project Tiger Reserve in southern India now have the opportunity to buy a range of Wildlife T-shirts, postcards and books, and at the same time make a contribution to local environmental charities. The owner of the 'Eco-shop', Girish, is keen to make contact with visiting birders and is himself a valuable source of information about the park's wildlife. 'Eco-shop' is situated just outside the park's Thekkady entrance.

Photospot: Whiskered Pitta

Four species of Pitta breed in the Philippines, two of which are endemic to the Archipelago. The attractive Azure-breasted Pitta *Pitta steerii* is found on the southern islands of Mindanao, Bohol, Samar and Leyte whereas the Whiskered Pitta *P. kochi* (which is also known as Koch's Pitta) is endemic to the northern island of Luzon.

The Whiskered Pitta primarily inhabits montane evergreen forest and seems to favour montane oak forest especially where there is dense undergrowth and steep ravines. Until the last decade there had been very few observations of Whiskered Pitta. However, extensive surveys in Isabella and Cagayan provinces in the northern Sierra Madre mountains in the early 1990s by a team of Danish ornithologists discovered large populations of Whiskered Pittas and contributed much of what is known today about the ecology of this species.

They found the pitta to be commonest in forest between 900 and 1400 metres where it preferred to forage for its invertebrate prey in damp soil and, in particular, in areas that had been recently disturbed by foraging wild pigs. Even for a pitta, a group renowned for their retiring nature, this species is generally extremely shy and secretive. They are largely terrestrial, seldom venturing more than a metre or two from the forest floor to call.

If it were not for the loud and distinctive territorial call the species would often go unrecorded. Indeed, at Mount Polis, a mountain in the Cordillera Central range which has been visited by many birders over the last decade the pitta has largely gone unnoticed until this year when up to five were heard in a small area in one morning. The call usually consists of 5-9 *'woo'* notes given in a series which descends in pitch and accelerates and is quite unlike other pittas being more reminiscent of a pigeon.

The plumage of the species is very close to the sympatric Red-bellied Pitta *P. erythrogaster* and the two must be separated with care. Whiskered Pitta is significantly larger (weighing twice as much as Red-bellied), lacks the blue collar and blue on the lower mantle and rump of the nominate race of Red-bellied with which it is sympatric and importantly shows dark ear coverts and a prominent pale whisker.

The superb photographs of an adult bird opposite were taken by Billy Simpson and have captured the true splendour of this species in an unusually fearless moment. They were taken at the Angat Watershed, an area of degraded forest north of Manila where forest still remains because the important watershed provides Manila with drinking water. As far as I am aware this was the first record of the species from this well watched site and at an altitude of approximately 300 metres is one of the lowest altitudinal records and perhaps suggests that the species may undergo local dispersive or altitudinal movements.

Although Whiskered Pitta was listed in Birds to Watch as vulnerable, recent records demonstrate that a healthy population exists in the remaining montane forest on Luzon and as it appears to adapt well to degraded forest the future for this delightful species looks somewhat rosier than that of many of the other threatened endemics of the Philippines.

Pete Morris

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1 Collar, N.J., Crosby, M.J. and Slatersfield, A.J. (1994) *Bird to Watch 2: the world list of threatened birds.* BirdLife International (BirdLife Conservation Series no. 4), Cambrigde, U.K.

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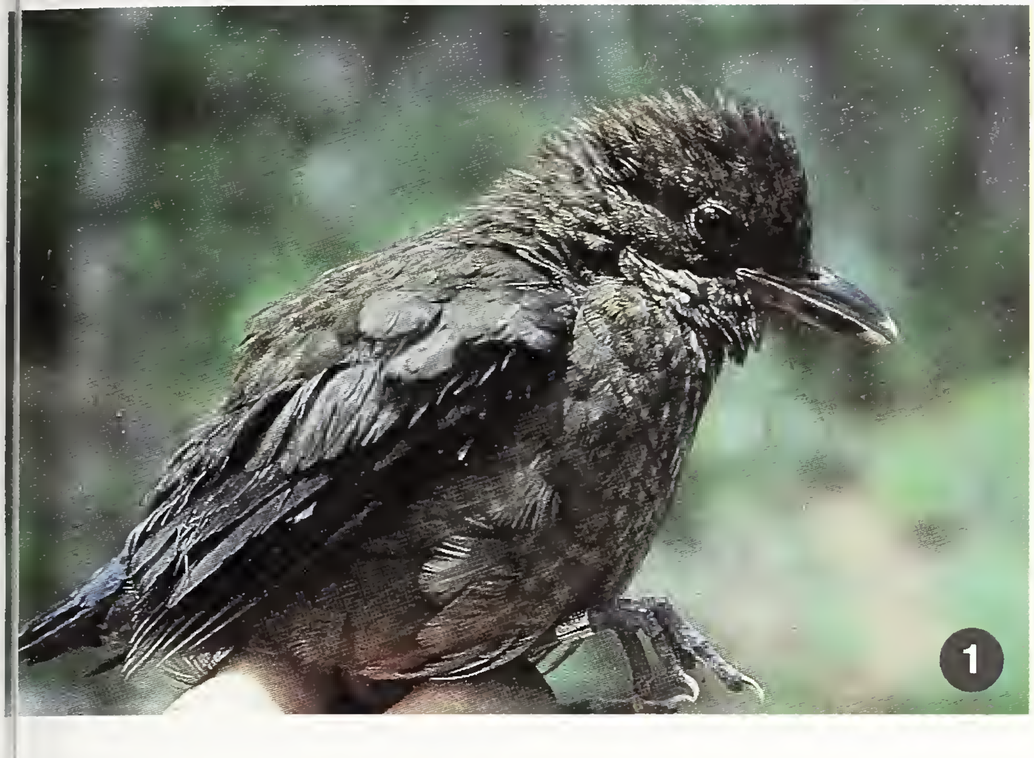

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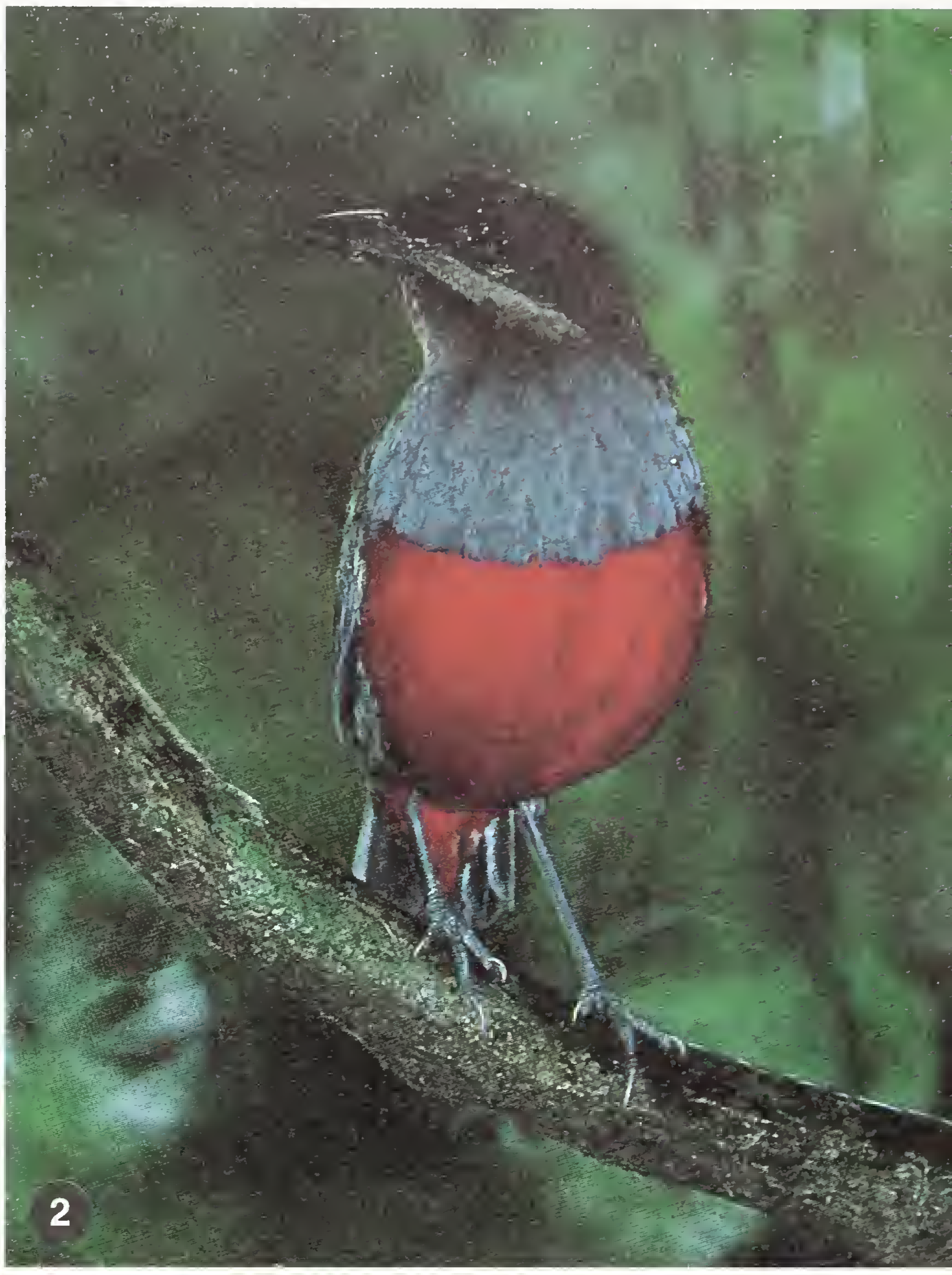
Fig. 1. Juvenile Whiskered Pitta Pitta kochi *(Photo: Michael Poulsen)*

Figs. 2 and 3. Adult Whiskered Pitta Pitta kochi *(Photos: Billy Simpson)*



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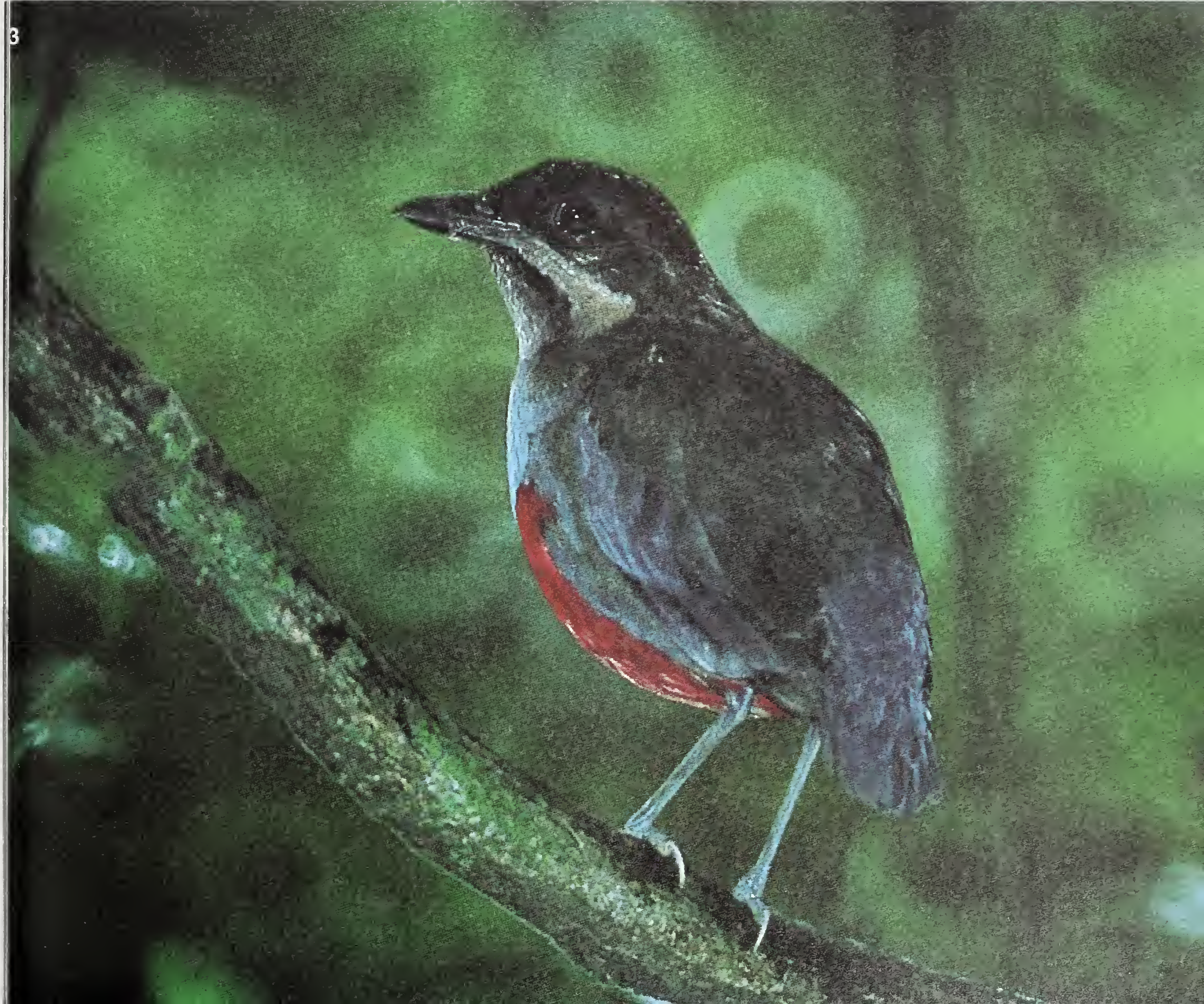

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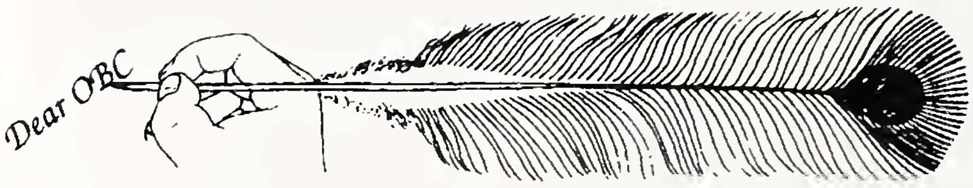
To the Editor



Black-necked Cranes acting as foster parents

Chushul is a traditional breeding place of the rare Black-necked Crane *Grus nigricollis* in North-eastern Ladakh/India. Last summer, ten cranes migrated to this area and by June two nests had been constructed, one in a small lake near Keru Palli village in the Tangtse Valley, and the other near Chushul village at Tsigul-Tso. This letter concerns the unique and exciting events that took place at the latter nest site.

I reached Chushul region late in the evening of 7th June 1996. Local people informed me of the current location and whereabouts of Black-necked Cranes, including mentioning a pair nesting at Tsigul-Tso, the lake situated a few kilometres outside the village.

The next morning, I visited the area and found the nest which contained three eggs. Sitting in my hide on a tiny, shaky peat-island about 50 m from the nest, I was able to record the birds' activities during the day. The cranes changed their incubation duties at regular intervals; the male sat for an average of about one to two hours, whereas the female remained for three to four hours on the nest. I was puzzled, however, as through my binoculars I could see one normal crane egg (cream-coloured, blotched with olive green-brown and about 10 cm long) and also two pure white eggs that were considerably smaller in size.

That evening an army officer, who was interested in birdwatching, explained to me the mystery surrounding the presence of two kinds of eggs in the cranes' nest.

Bar-headed Geese, which had migrated to Tsigul-Tso in April, had occupied the traditional crane nesting island. The cranes, the 'legal proprietors', had reached the lake a few weeks later and found their nesting site occupied by the breeding geese. Their reaction was to drive off the intruders and then to take over the nest, including its content of two eggs, and add a third egg of their own to the clutch.

On 10th June I returned to my island hide and found two chicks freshly hatched from the two white eggs - Bar-headed Goose chicks!! These yellow-and-black coloured feather balls, each a little over 10 cm in size, staggered around the nest-platform or were kept warm by their 'parents' which remained sitting on their single crane egg. From the very first moment the Black-necked Crane adults fully adopted their strange-looking offspring (see photo p.60).

The next day the youngsters looked much at ease both on their island and when sunbathing on their 'parents'' backs. However, there was great excitement when one chick ventured straight into the water. This is of course nothing extraordinary for a goose chick, but the breeding 'parent' crane must have nearly had a heart attack! It jumped up and called the chick immediately back to the nest with an agitated *'gorr-kro, gorr-kro, gorr-kro...'* reluctantly the chick followed the order of authority. However, an hour later the same chick disobeyed again. To my surprise, this time the crane only called with some softer *'gorr-kros'*, and with much less excitement (I realised that even adult birds must be able to learn quickly). This encouraged the chick, which was now swimming further away around the breeding fortress. When it landed back on the island, however, it immediately ran for shelter under the crane's belly.

For the next few days I continued observing the activities in and around the nest; the Black-necked Cranes continued incubating their single (crane) egg, while the two lively geese chicks developed fast, becoming more and more active - although, to my surprise, they were never observed feeding or being fed by their foster parents. It seemed to me that during the first days after hatching they must live on stored food that they had absorbed while still inside the egg.

Unfortunately, I then had to leave Chushul. However, I received some more news one month later from a friend who had carried on watching the development of this unusual family. He informed me that the third egg hatched at the end of June. The three juvenile birds were roaming around the nest site and were being faithfully cared for by their parents...

Otto Pfister, Delhi, India

Spectacular movements of hornbills, possibly Plain-pouched Hornbills *Aceros subruficollis*, in Peninsular Malaysia

On 10th August 1992, Sutari Supari observed a spectacular succession of hornbill flocks, a total of some 300 birds, flying across the upper reaches of Sungai Perak, in the area of Tasak Kenering. This is an amazing record for the Malay Peninsula.

Subsequently, Sutari, myself and some friends returned to this location from the 7th to 10th September 1992. The hornbills were again flying. Throughout our stay observations and systematic counts were carried out from a boat in the middle of the river.

Observations of flights

The birds made a three-note call in flight, a grunting *'ehk-ehk-ehk'*, with a lilt to the last note. All flocks were of mixed sexes. The roosting/evening flocks were moving from north to south over a 1 km front, most of the larger ones in a distinct V-shaped formation. The feeding/morning flocks moved in the reverse direction, appearing at longer intervals and on a wider front, approximately 2 km in breadth. The feeding flocks were generally smaller, some of them joining together as they passed over the river. The largest total number counted was on 7th September during the evening/roosting flight (our first counting session), with a total of 764 birds flying in 59 groups from 18.15-18.45 (Table 1). The largest single flock consisted of 39 birds on the 8th September during the evening flight. There was generally a progressive decline in the number of flocks as well as in the total number of individuals seen during the period of observation. The flocks typically comprised of 5-30 birds. Judging from photographs there were more females than males in each group, the average ratio being 1.2:1.

Discussion

Very little is known of the Plain-pouched Hornbill *Aceros subruficollis* because of its supposed rarity in the Malay Peninsula as well as in Thailand. According to Robinson and Chasen[1], it has been recorded in the mangroves on the coast of Selangor and at sea along the coasts of the Straits of Malacca. It may be migratory, associating in large flocks and flying over great distances to feed. Records of large numbers in the Malay Peninsula are therefore particularly noteworthy.

Descriptions: *Males;* body blackish. Whole of neck sulfur. Gular pouch sulfur without any visible bar marking. Tail white, tinged with rufous all the way to the base and short, distinctly shorter than the body. Some of the males had blackish edging to the outer tail feathers. Crown chestnut. Bill pale yellow with the tip almost whitish and the base tinged reddish. Casque flat and low. Eye-ring reddish. *Females;* Smaller than the males. Body blackish. Crown and neck blackish. Pouch prominent, bright blue. Tail short, shorter than body length. Bill yellow and shorter than that of the male, also with a reddish tinge to the base. Casque very low. Eye-ring red, but less prominent than that of the male.

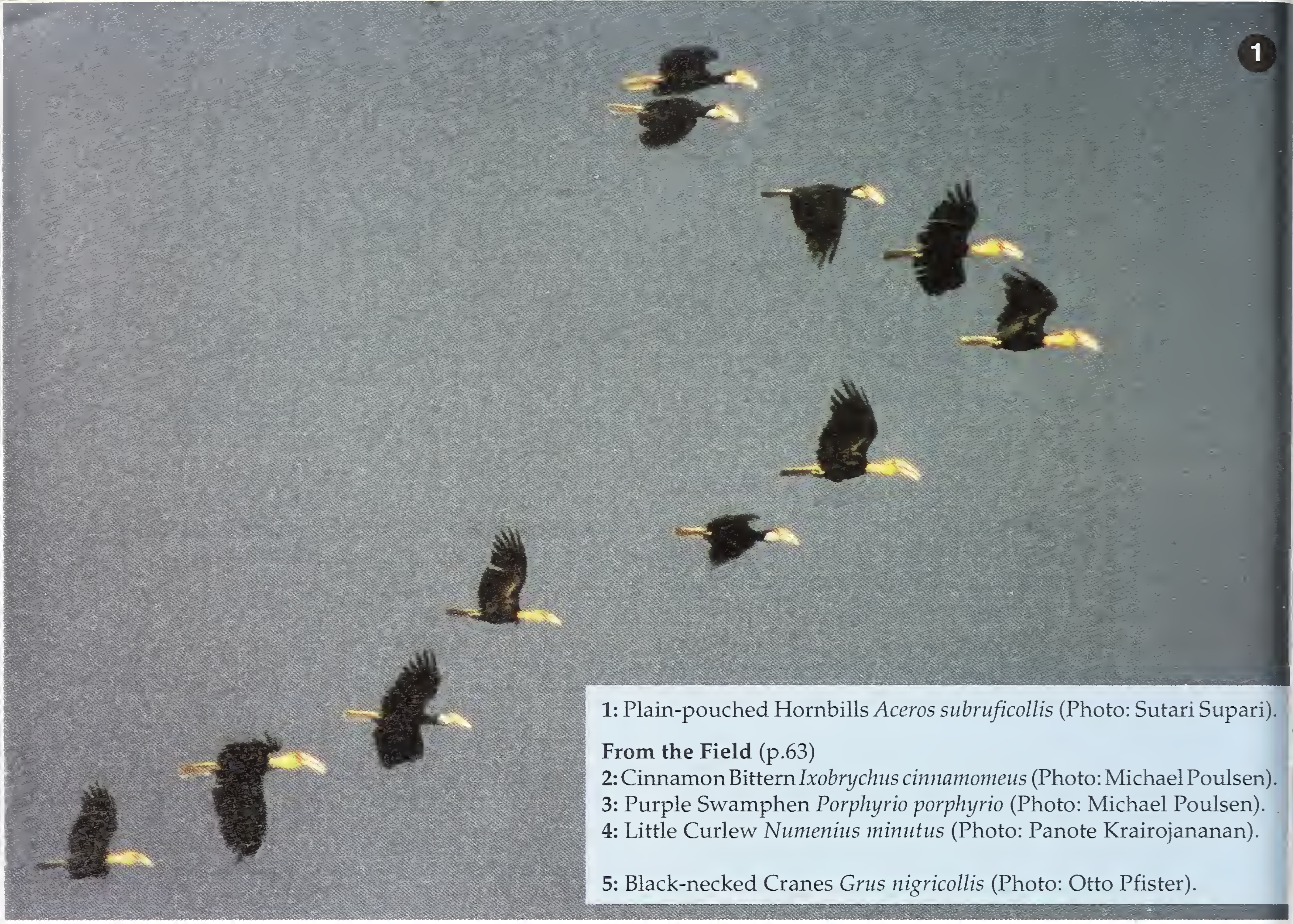
Identification: The birds look superficially like Wreathed Hornbills *Aceros undulatus* with the white on the tail going all the way to the base and both males and females possessing a low, yellowish casque. However, a careful study of the photographs (see p.60) reveals that the corrugations on the base of the bill, typical of the Wreathed Hornbill, are absent on both the males and females. Moreover, the pouches of both the males and the females also lack the black bar typical of that species. It is unlikely that they were immature or subadult Wreathed Hornbills given the number of birds seen and the three-note flight call, with a lilt on the last note - which may be diagnostic for Plain-pouched Hornbill.

Recent Events

In 1993 a single observer reported a flight of 2,421 hornbills on 24th November and a flight of 2,365 on the following day in the Tasek Temenggor area! The hornbills were not specifically identified[2], but Tasek Temenggor is only about 60 km north-east of Tasek Kenering. These reports were followed in August 1994 by a sighting of a total of 1,277 hornbills flying over the Tasek Temenggor area again[3]. These birds were identified as Wreathed Hornbills by the observer, but no description was given. In a follow-up expedition to Tasek Kenering from 5th to 7th September 1994, hornbills were again sighted by us, although in much smaller numbers, with a maximum total of about 185 birds in one flight.

Conclusion

Regardless of which species of hornbill is involved in these remarkable sightings, it is essential that, given the very high number of



1: Plain-pouched Hornbills *Aceros subruficollis* (Photo: Sutari Supari).

From the Field (p.63)
2: Cinnamon Bittern *Ixobrychus cinnamomeus* (Photo: Michael Poulsen).
3: Purple Swamphen *Porphyrio porphyrio* (Photo: Michael Poulsen).
4: Little Curlew *Numenius minutus* (Photo: Panote Krairojananan).

5: Black-necked Cranes *Grus nigricollis* (Photo: Otto Pfister).

Table 1 *Counts of Hornbills in 1992*

Session	No of Groups*	Largest Group	Total No. of Birds
7th Sept			
(18.15-18.55)	59	30	764
8th Sept			
(07.30-09.25)	45	20	325
(17.30-19.00)	38	39	401
9th Sept			
(07.30-09.05)	40	22	225
(18.30-18.45)	18	25	236
10th Sept			
(07.20-09.00)	24	15	146

*Group defined as two or more birds flying close together

individuals involved, protection should be urgently given to the areas in which they have been found to occur.

Acknowledgements

We thank both Pilai Poonswad and Dennis Yong for helpful discussions about these sightings.

Ho Hua Chew and **Sutari Supari**, 11 Marigold Drive, Singapore 2057

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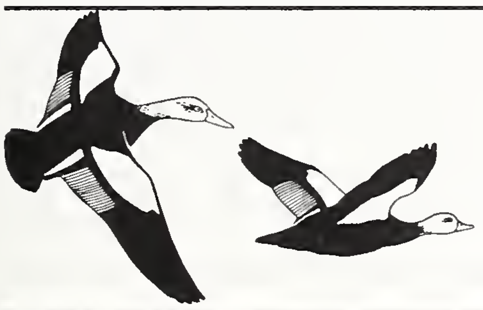


From the Field

Compiled by Craig Robson

GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

These are largely unconfirmed records covering the period from January 1996 to February 1997. We urge that if they have not already done so, contributors provide full details to the relevant regional organisations in due course.

BHUTAN

A **Cinereous Vulture** *Aegypius monachus* over the Kori La, E Bhutan on 18 April (PH-Sunbird) was the first national record.

BURMA (MYANMAR)

12-14 **Pale-capped Pigeons** *Columba punicea* were seen in Hlawga Park, north of Yangon (Rangoon) on 15th December (HBu); this appears to be a regular winter site for the species.

CAMBODIA

A visit in January 1996 (PE) produced three new records for the country, 13 **Nordmann's Greenshanks** *Tringa guttifer* at Kaoh Kapik on 28-30th, 24 **Broad-billed Sandpipers** *Limicola falcinellus* near Kampot on 19th and at least 190 at Kaoh Kapik on 29th and five **Lesser Crested Terns** *Sterna bengalensis* at Kaoh Kapik on 30th. Six **White-winged Ducks** *Cairina scutulata* and a single **Great White Pelican** *Pelecanus onocrotalus* at Boeng Chhma were the first records since the early 1960s. Other interesting observations were national high counts of 101 **Caspian Terns** *Sterna caspia* near Kampot on 19th and 17 **Common Terns** *S. hirundo* in Preah Sihanouk National Park on 21st. No less than 15 new species for the country were recorded during a short visit to the Dak Dam area in the east of the country in January 1997 (WD): **Bay Woodpecker** *Blythipicus pyrrhotis*, **Black-browed Barbet** *Megalaima oorti*, **Oriental Bay Owl** *Phodilus badius*, **Mountain Scops Owl** *Otus spilocephalus*, **Collared Owlet** *Glaucidium brodiei*, **Oriental Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia orientalis*, **Maroon Oriole** *Oriolus traillii*, **Grey Bushchat** *Saxicola ferrea*, **Black-throated Tit** *Aegithalos concinnus*, **Ashy Bulbul** *Hemixos flavala*, **White-cheeked Laughingthrush** *Garrulax vassali*, **Grey-faced Tit Babbler** *Macronous kelleyi*, **Silver-eared Mesia** *Mesia argentauris*, **Mountain Fulvetta** *Alcippe peracensis* (subspecies undetermined) and **Black-chinned Yuhina** *Yuhina nigrimenta*. **Pin-tailed Green Pigeon** *Treron apicauda* and **Slaty-backed Forktail** *Enicurus schistaceus* were also new but had previously been recorded at this locality in 1996 (AD,LV). **Spotted Redshank** *Tringa erythropus* and **Temminck's Stint** *Calidris temminckii* near Phnom Phenh and **Eurasian Jay** *Garrulus glandarius* at San Monorom were also first records. **Black Bulbuls** *Hypsipetes leucocephalus*, of one of the white-headed migrant subspecies and nominate **Fire-breasted Flowerpeckers** *Dicaeum ignipectus* in the Dak Dam area were new subspecies records for the country.

CHINA

In the Beidaihe area, a number of new species for Hebei were recorded: a female **Slaty-blue Flycatcher** *Ficedula tricolor* on Happy Island on 9th and 12th May (HJ-Earlybird,GC-Birdquest), a second calendar-year male **Chinese Blue Flycatcher** *Cyornis (rubeculoides) glaucicomans*, photographed on 14th May (JH) and a female **Northern Wheatear** *Oenanthe oenanthe* on 17th May (JH). Other rarities included a female **Grey-chinned Minivet** *Pericrocotus solaris* on Happy Island on 10th May (HJ-Earlybird) and a **Rosy Pipit** *Anthus roseatus* on 18th May (HJ-Earlybird,DZ-Regulus). Two **Red-whiskered Bulbuls** *Pycnonotus jocosus* at Beijing International Airport on 27th May (HJ-Earlybird) were presumed escapees. At Gaoligongshan, W Yunnan notable records (JH) included a male **Pygmy Blue Flycatcher** *Muscicapella hodgsoni* on 9th April and large numbers of migrating sunbirds between 3rd and 12th April, with estimates of 974 **Mrs Gould's** *Aethopyga gouldiae* and an amazing 16,200 **Fire-tailed** *A. ignicauda*. Other notable records from W Yunnan (JH) included a **Black-tailed Crake** *Porzana bicolor* at Ruili on 23rd April and two different male **Pygmy Blue Flycatchers** at Yungfengshan on 23rd and 26th March. In the north-east, there was a single **Siberian Crane** *Grus leucogeranus* at Xianghai Nature Reserve, Jilin on 23-24th May (HJ-Earlybird,DZ-Regulus); a second calendar-year bird had previously been observed there on 23rd May 1995 (HJ-Earlybird). A breeding plumaged **Black Tern** *Chlidonias niger* at Medamuji, *ca.* 75km south of Hailar, Nei Monggol Zizhiqu (Inner Mongolia) on 9 June (HJ-Earlybird) was well east of its known breeding range in China.

HONG KONG

The current period saw several potential firsts for Hong Kong, a male **Blue-breasted Quail** *Coturnix chinensis* at Tai Mo Shan on 8th May (ML,GR), a juvenile **Speckled Piculet** *Picumnus innominatus* trapped at Wong Cheuk Yeung, near Sai Kung on 25th July (ML) and this or another nearby on 27th (JH), a **Common Swift** *Apus apus* at Mai Po on 3rd April (DM,NM,MW), also seen on 4th and 5th, a summer-plumaged **Horned Grebe** *Podiceps auritus* at Mai Po on 9th April (JB), a single **Bulwer's Petrel** *Bulweria bulwerii* near Po Toi on 3rd May (ML,GR) and a single **Wedge-tailed Shearwater** *Puffinus pacificus* from the Dong Ping Chau ferry on 21st April (JS). Calls heard at Kadoorie Farm and KARC around 19th April (ML,GR) were thought to have been made by a **Mountain Scops Owl** *Otus spilocephalus* another potential first. A first winter **Mew Gull** *Larus canus* at Mai Po on 9th February 1996 (PL *et al.*) was believed to be subspecies *heinei*, not previously recorded from Hong Kong. Other rarities during the period under review included a juvenile **Hodgson's Hawk Cuckoo** *Hierococcyx fugax*, picked up alive at Fanling in late September (anon), a single **Water Rail** *Rallus aquaticus* at Mai Po on 8th April (GC), a single **Band-bellied Crake** *Porzana paykullii*, found dead outside the Tsuen Wan entrance to the Shing Mun Tunnel on 14th May (MC), the second record and first in spring, up to two **Little Curlews** *Numenius minutus* at Mai Po on 22nd April (MW,PS), a **Long-billed Dowitcher** *Limnodromus scolopaceus* at Mai Po on

9th March (anon), which remained until late April, single **Pectoral Sandpipers** *Calidris melanotos* at Mai Po on 15th April (PL), Shuen Wan on 19-21st April (JE) and Nam Sang Wai on 24th April (JH) and two at Long Valley on 21-23rd October (anon), the first in autumn, **Christmas Island Frigatebirds** *Fregata andrewsi* near Sha Cha Island on 6th August (PL,RP) and another picked up in an urban park in Kowloon in September (anon), three **Great Crested Terns** *Sterna bergii* between Aberdeen and the Ninepins on 21st April (YT *et al.*), a single **Paddyfield Warbler** *Acrocephalus a. agricola* at Mai Po on 13th February 1996 (PL), the second record, a single **White-tailed Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus davisoni* at Kowloon Hills Catchwater on 28th February 1996 (DD), a single **Eurasian Skylark** *Alauda arvensis* at Long Valley on 23rd February 1996 (anon), a male **Russet Sparrow** *Passer rutilans* at Mai Po on 2nd April (SR), single male **Pine Buntings** *Emberiza leucocephalos* at Stanley on 6th April (JS) and Tai Po Kau Tsuen on 8-10th April (JH,GC), the former described as tame and the latter with damaged tail feathers, single **Meadow Buntings** *E. cioides* at Chek Lap Kok on 27th February 1996 and 12th March (GC), at Tai Tam on 30th March (IT) and Sandy Bay on 11th April (MT), a male **Yellow-browed Bunting** *E. chrysophrys* at Mai Po on 4-8th April (anon), single **Yellow-throated Buntings** *E. elegans* near Tai Po Kau on 8th April (LB), at Tai Tam on 9th April (MT) and two on 10th (JH), a male **Black-headed Bunting** *E. melanocephala* at Long Valley on 20th April (MC), a **Pallas's Bunting** *E. pallasi* at Mai Po on 20th February 1996 (DD) and a flurry of **Reed Buntings** *E. schoeniclus*, with two trapped at Mai Po on 18th February 1996 (PL), three there on 20th (WY,DD), another trapped there on 3rd March (PL), up to four at Lim Barn Tseun from 11 March until 8th April (PL) and two at Lut Chau on 12th March (PL). Record numbers of **Long-tailed Jaegers** *Stercorarius longicaudatus* were recorded, with at least 77 being seen during various boat trips in the latter half of April (JH,MW,JS,PL,RL,KW,VP,YT *et al.*). **Aleutian Terns** *S. aleutica* also made a showing in April, with a total of 33 observed during boat trips between 16th and 21st April (MW,VP,YT *et al.*). April was also exceptional for **Japanese Yellow Buntings** *E. sulphurata*, with a total of up to 45 birds at eight localities during 4-24th and a maximum high count of 17 at Long Valley (anon). Two **Eurasian Blackbirds** *Turdus merula*, with a recently fledged juvenile, at Fung Yuen on 19th May (JH), provided the first breeding record for Hong Kong. Record numbers of breeding terns were present at Gau Tau, where 75 pairs of **Bridled** *S. anaethetus*, 50 pairs of **Black-naped** *S. sumatrana* and 50 pairs of **Roseate** *S. dougallii* were counted on 10th July, all with young (VP *et al.*). 180 adult **Bridled** were counted during a return visit on 29th (VP *et al.*).

INDIA

126 **Bar-headed Geese** *Anser indicus* at Karaivetti Lake, near Tiruchirapalli, Tamil Nadu during December-February (AR) were interesting this far south in the country and they have been recorded at this locality annually since 1988. In Madhya Pradesh, 30 **Greylag Geese** *Anser anser* on 1 March and a single **Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus* on 9th March, at Kanha Tiger Reserve (RK), were also interesting southerly winter records. Three **Siberian Cranes** *Grus leucogeranus* returned to winter at Bharatpur and were still present in mid December (PB). A **Blue-throated Flycatcher** *Cyornis rubeculoides* seen there in February 1996 (PH-Sunbird) was the first record for Rajasthan. In the Goa area, rarities included a first winter **Mew Gull** *Larus canus* at Morjim on 14th December and a single **Stoliczka's Bushchat** *Saxicola macrorhyncha* near Carambolim on 10th and 18th December (PH-Sunbird). A **Yellow-rumped Flycatcher** *Ficedula zanthopygia* in Periyar National Park on 30th January 1996 (PH-Sunbird) was only the second for India and a **Yellow-browed Warbler** *Phylloscopus inornatus* seen on the same day was the most southerly Indian record to date. A number of new species were recorded for Punjab at Harike Bird Sanctuary (PU), including a single **Asian Dowitcher** *Limnodromus semipalmatus* on 18th May, a **Long-toed Stint** *Calidris subminuta* on 19th May, **Collared Pratincoles** *Glareola pratincola* on 24th March (one), 31st March (two) and 28th April (three), single immature **Pied Harriers** *Circus melanoleucos* on 10th March and from 30th November to 8th February and up to 11 **Richard's Pipits** *Anthus richardi* on 10th March. Up to 50 **White-crowned Penduline Tits** *Remiz coronatus*, seen on 31st March, provided what may only be the second Indian record; four were seen near Delhi on 21st December 1981 (CR,SW,MP) and there are doubtful old records from Ladakh. Other unusual records at Harike were a male **Smew** *Mergellus albellus* on 24th March, a juvenile

European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster* on 1st September, a **Large-tailed Nightjar** *Caprimulgus macrurus* on 30th November, up to 17 **Long-eared Owls** *Asio otus* on 23rd March, a **Ruddy Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres* on 19th October, a first winter **European Golden Plover** *Pluvialis apricaria* on 1st-8th December, a single **Eurasian Oystercatcher** *Haematopus ostralegus* on 28th April, a first winter **Little Gull** *Larus minutus* on 13th October and a single **Himalayan Bulbul** *Pycnonotus leucogenys* on 28th December. Interesting high counts included a maximum of at least 2,000 **Yellow-eyed Pigeons** *Columba eversmanni* between 13th October and 8th February and 86 **Black-bellied Terns** *Sterna acuticauda* on 22nd September. A first winter **Ashy Drongo** *Dicrurus leucophaeus* on 28th December, a single **Paddyfield Warbler** *Acrocephalus agricola* on 22nd December and a **Blyth's Reed Warbler** *A. dumetorum* on 10th January 1997 were all new wintering records for Punjab. An unseasonal ringtail **Hen Harrier** *C. cyaneus* was seen on 30th June and at least three adult **Booted Warblers** *Hippolais caligata*, including one feeding a fledged juvenile on 1st June, confirmed that this species breeds in India. Some interesting species were also found in Ropar District, Punjab, in early January 1997 (PU), namely a male **Falcated Duck** *Anas falcata* and a single **Scaly Thrush** *Zoothera dauma* at Ropar on 4th, a single **Smoky Warbler** *Phylloscopus fuligiventer* at Ropar on 2nd, at least five **Buff-bellied Pipits** *Anthus rubescens* at Kiratpur on 3rd-5th and 13 **Yellow-breasted Buntings** *Emberiza aureola* at Kiratpur on 4th and 5th. A count of 38 **Red-naped (Black) Ibises** *Pseudibis papillosa* between Ropar and Kiratpur on 2nd and 5th was encouraging. A single **Rufous-vented Prinia** *Prinia burnesii* at Ropar on 2nd was also interesting.

INDONESIA

Ambon

The following new or unusual species have been recorded from the island (MPo): a **White-breasted Waterhen** *Amaurornis phoenicurus* caught by local people at Halong on 11th January 1996, with adults and young reported from Passo (IM), three **Common Redshanks** *Tringa totanus* at Passo on 3 September (the first had previously been seen at the same place on 1st October 1995), four **Curlew Sandpipers** *Calidris ferruginea* at Passo on 3rd September and another two on 11th September, at least four **Lesser Sand Plovers** *Charadrius mongolus* at Galala on 11-12th September (the first had previously been seen at Passo on 12th November 1995) and **Black-headed Gull** *Larus ridibundus*, with a single at Galala on 11th January 1996 and at least two in Ambon's harbour area during 11th January to 7th March 1996. Flocks of up to 100 feral **Rock Pigeons** *Columba livia* were also noted at two places in Ambon Town.

Buru

During a joint PHPA/BirdLife survey from 28th May to 10th June (MPo), the following new species were added to the island list: **Little Kingfisher** *Alcedo pusilla* in three places at Kayeli Bay on 1st-3rd June, five **Common Redshanks** *Tringa totanus* at Kayeli Bay on 4th June, up to 15 **Grey Plovers** *Pluvialis squatarola* at Kayeli Bay on 31st May to 4th June, a flock of 17-20 **Australian Pelicans** *Pelecanus conspicillatus* at Kaki Air, Kayeli Bay on 30th May to 4th June and 20 **Tree Martins** *Hirundo nigricans* in the Mako area, Apu River on 4th June. An unidentified harrier *Circus* was seen at Grandeng on 6th June; there are no previous harrier records from the island. Five **White-headed Stilts** *Himantopus (himantopus) leucocephalus* at Kayeli Bay on 31st May and a single **Australian Pratincole** *Stiltia isabella* on Namlea Airfield were the second and third records respectively and the first this century. Also of note were 200 **Common Terns** *Sterna hirundo* in Kayeli Bay on 30th May and an unseasonal **Barn Swallow** *H. rustica* in the Mako area, Apu River on 4th June.

Halmahera

A joint PHPA/BirdLife survey from 15th April to 6th May (MPo), turned up the following new records for the island: a juvenile **Purple Swamphen** *Porphyrio porphyrio* caught in Tolewang on 25th April, two **White-throated Needletails** *Hirundapus caudacutus* at Tolewang on 24th April and another on 25th April, three **Common Redshanks** *Tringa totanus* on mudflats at Dodaga Mangrove on 30th April, with over 20 there on 1st May, up to five breeding-plumaged **Javan Pond Herons** *Ardeola speciosa* at Tolewang, Kao (also new for Maluku) and at least ten different **Cinnamon Bitterns** *Ixobrychus cinnamomeus* at Tolewang during 23rd-27th April. Other noteworthy sightings included a large flock of *ca.* 150 **Spotted Whistling-ducks** *Dendrocygna guttata* at Tolewang on 23rd-27th April, **Fork-**

tailed Swifts *Apus pacificus* at Tanah Putih on 21st April (one), Tolewang on 23rd-24th April (up to three) and Kao on 28th April (one) and a **Bare-eyed Rail** *Gymnocrex plumbeiventris* caught by local people at Goal, north of Jailolo on 21st April.

Haruku

Birdwatching between Haruku Village and Pelauw on 3rd-4th March (MPo), resulted in no less than 14 new species for the island: four **Moluccan Scops Owls** *Otus magicus* (heard), **Brown Cuckoo Dove** *Macropygia amboinensis* (heard), five **Whimbrels** *Numenius phaeopus*, a single **Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos*, two **Pacific Golden Plovers** *Pluvialis fulva*, two **Brahminy Kites** *Haliastur indus*, a single **White-bellied Sea Eagle** *Haliaeetus leucogaster*, a **Spotted Kestrel** *Falco moluccensis*, an **Oriental Hobby** *F. severus*, two **Little Herons** *Butorides striatus*, three **Slaty Monarchs** *Myiagra galeata* (heard), four **Island Starlings** *Aplonis mysolensis* with nest holes at Pelauw, 50 **Shining Starlings** *A. metallica* and five **Yellow Wagtails** *Motacilla flava*. Unidentified white-eyes *Zosterops* that sounded like **Ambon White-eye** *Zosterops kuehni*, were heard on three occasions; there are no previous white-eye records from the island. Also of interest were a single **Red Lory** *Eos bornea* and two **Red-cheeked Parrots** *Geoffroyus geoffroyi*.

Pombo

This small island, between Ambon and Haruku, was surveyed for the first time by a joint PHPA/BirdLife team on 14-15th September (MPo). The only species previously mentioned for the island was **Grey Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola*, so the following were all new records for the island: **Collared Kingfisher** *Todiramphus chloris*, **Sacred Kingfisher** *T. sanctus*, **Rainbow Bee-eater** *Merops ornatus*, **Uniform Swiftlet** *Collocalia vanikorensis*, **Pied Imperial Pigeon** *Ducula bicolor*, **White-bellied Sea Eagle** *Haliaeetus leucogaster*, **Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus*, **Terek Sandpiper** *Xenus cinereus*, **Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos*, **Grey-tailed Tattler** *Heteroscelus brevipes*, **Ruddy Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres*, **Red-necked Stint** *Calidris ruficollis*, **Pacific Golden Plover** *P. fulva*, **Lesser Sand Plover** *Charadrius mongolus*, **Greater Sand Plover** *C. leschenaultii*, **Greater Crested Tern** *Sterna bergii*, **Little Pied Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax melanoleucos*, **Little Black Cormorant** *P. sulcirostris*, **Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta*, **Pacific Reef Egret** *E. sacra*, **Australian Pelican** *Pelecanus conspicillatus*, **Island Monarch** *Monarcha cinerascens*, **Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica* and **Olive-backed Sunbird** *Nectarinia jugularis*.

Riau Archipelago

The most interesting news was of single **Aleutian Terns** *Sterna aleutica*, the first for Indonesia, seen off Pulau Bintan on 1st and 3rd October (SR); the species has quite recently found to be a regular passage migrant in Hong Kong (see also Singapore). Also new for the archipelago were a single **Malaysian Eared Nightjar** *Eurostopodus temminckii* near Kampong Lagoi on 26th November (SR,RTe) and a flock of five **White-faced Storm-petrels** *Pelagodroma marina* flying west from Pulau Batam on 1st October (SR,RTe,NBC,WLK). A **Blue-winged Pitta** *Pitta moluccensis* heard near Kampong Lagoi on 26th November (SR,RTe) was the first for Pulau Bintan and the second for the archipelago, while two **White-headed Munias** *Lonchura maja* near Tanjong Tondang on 3rd October (RTe) were the first for Pulau Bintan. Other rare visitors to the archipelago included two **Hodgson's Hawk Cuckoos** *Hierococcyx fugax* near Kampong Lagoi on 27th November (SR), only the third record, a single **Himalayan Swiftlet** *Collocalia brevirostris* near Tanjong Said on 2nd October (SR) and two male **Yellow-rumped Flycatchers** *Ficedula zanthopygia* near Kampong Lagoi on 27th November (SR,RTe), the second record. A single **Javan Frogmouth** *Batrachostomus javensis* seen and two others heard, near Kampong Lagoi on 26th November (SR,RTe) and a single **Buffy Fish Owl** *Ketupa ketupu* in swamp forest south of Tanjong Said on 2nd October (SR,RTe,NBC,WLK) were the first confirmed records since the 1930s. Large numbers of **Swinhoe's Storm-petrels** *Oceanodroma monorhis* were seen passing the coast of Pulau Batam on 1st and 3rd October (SR,RTe,NBC, WLK), with 360 counted in a 25 minute period on 3rd.

Sulawesi

A visit to North Sulawesi Province in late summer (FL) resulted in some interesting observations. On Sangihe, a scops owl observed, tape-recorded and photographed on 28 July was believed to be more similar to **Sulawesi Scops Owl** *Otus manadensis* than **Moluccan Scops Owl** *O. magicus*, the species previously listed for the island. A group of at least four birds, presumed to be **Little Shrike-thrush**

Colluricincla megarhyncha, and singles on 10th and 11th August, were observed on Mt. Sahengbalira on 9th August; the occurrence of this species in Wallacea has been doubted. The little known endemic subspecies of **Black-crowned White-eye** *Zosterops atrifrons nehrkorni* was seen on a number of occasions (*ca.* 900m elevation) at the same locality. Two **Wilson's Storm-petrels** *Oceanites oceanicus* were seen during the crossing from Sangihe to Talaud on 13th August. On Karakelong, Talaud, a single **Buff-banded Rail** *Gallirallus philippensis* in the southern part of the island, on 8th September and a single **Black Noddy** *Anous minutus* on a beach on 23rd August are apparently the first recorded from Talaud. A pair of crakes, tentatively identified as **Red-necked Crake** *Rallina tricolor* were seen in primary forest on the same island on 21st August and would constitute a major range extension in the region. Observations of an immature **Malayan Night Heron** *Gorsachius melanolophus* on several dates in mid August confirm the species as a breeder here. Flocks of up to nine **Grey Imperial Pigeons** *Ducula pickeringii* on Kalakelong in August, were also interesting.

Tidore

A visit on 16th April (MPo), with a PHPA/ BirdLife team, turned up five new species for the island: a single **Sacred Kingfisher** *Todiramphus sanctus*, eight **Rainbow Bee-eaters** *Merops ornatus*, a dark morph **Pacific Reef Egret** *Egretta sacra*, twenty **Willie-wagtails** *Rhipidura leucophrys* and ten **Eurasian Tree Sparrows** *Passer montanus*.

LAOS

The most significant news received, relates to ornithological records from a previously unexplored mountain range which extends from east S Laos into southern C Annam in Vietnam (see Vietnam). In spring, Dakchung District, east of Saravane, S Laos was visited (RT). **Black-hooded Laughingthrush** *Garrulax milleti*, previously thought to be endemic to S Annam in Vietnam, was seen on a number of occasions and the following, all representing considerable southward range extensions, were recorded for the first time in S Laos: **Golden-throated Barbet** *Megalaima franklinii*, **Crested Myna** *Acridotheres cristatellus*, **Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher** *Ficedula strophiata*, **Yellow-browed Tit** *Sylviparus modestus*, **Ashy-throated Warbler** *Phylloscopus maculipennis*, **Rufous-capped Babbler** *Stachyris ruficeps*, **Cutia** *Cutia nipalensis*, **Red-tailed Minla** *Minla ignotincta*, **Spectacled Fulvetta** *Alcippe ruficapilla*, **Rusty-capped Fulvetta** *Alcippe dubia*, **Rufous-backed Sibia** *Heterophasia annectans*, **Long-tailed Sibia** *Heterophasia picaoides*, **Grey-headed Parrotbill** *Paradoxornis gularis*, **Golden Parrotbill** *Paradoxornis verreauxi* (probably of an undescribed subspecies) and **Green-tailed Sunbird** *Aethopyga nipalensis*. Three other potential firsts for S Laos, to be confirmed, were **Short-billed Minivet** *Pericrocotus brevirostris*, **Yellow-billed Nuthatch** *Sitta solangiae* and **Pygmy Blue Flycatcher** *Muscicapella hodgsoni*. Also of interest were **Crested Argus** *Rheinardia ocellata*, resident **Blyth's Leaf Warblers** *Phylloscopus reguloides*, **Coral-billed Scimitar Babbler** *Pomatorhinus ferruginosus* and **Black-headed Sibias** *Heterophasia melanoleuca* of an undescribed subspecies (see Vietnam). A little further south, Dong Ampham National Biodiversity Conservation Area, east of Attopeu was surveyed in January 1996 by a WCS team (PD *et al.*). Interesting records here included flocks of **Black-hooded Laughingthrushes**. In N Laos, **House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus* was observed in Vientiane in January 1997, the first record for the country. In the early part of 1996, two **Giant Ibises** *Pseudibis gigantea* were seen on the Cambodian border, west of the Mekong River, S Laos and breeding **Jerdon's Bushchats** *Saxicola jerdoni* were located along the Mekong River west of Vientiane, N Laos (RTi).

Yellow-billed Nuthatch
Sitta solangiae
by Hil Bruinsma

MALAYSIA

Peninsular Malaysia

Interesting observations in Johor Province included a single **Waterfall Swiftlet** *Hydrochrous gigas*, seen briefly over Panti Forest Reserve on 10 November (SR) and three **Lesser Adjutants** *Leptoptilos javanicus* on 1st January 1996 (NBC,SR,AT,ST) and a single **Pale-legged Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus tenellipes* on 10th November (SR,LKC) at Kukup Mangrove Reserve, in the south-west. There has been further news regarding the spread of **Savanna Nightjar** *Caprimulgus affinis*, which has colonised Singapore and now Johor Province, in recent times; a road-kill specimen was found along the Bunker Track in Panti FR on 3rd January 1996 (NBC,SR,AT,ST), reconfirming previous sight and sound records from the same area and 15 were seen along a dirt road at Sedili Kecil on 11th November (SR).

Sabah

A single **Pink-headed Imperial Pigeon** *Ducula rosacea* on Pulau Sipadan, 25 km south of Semporna, on 27th February 1996 (PE) and a first winter **Black-headed Bunting** *Emberiza melanocephala* on Pulau Tiga, south-west of Kota Kinabalu on 16th October (JD) were both potential firsts for Malaysia and the island of Borneo.

Sarawak

A single Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus* at Damai Beach, Kuching on 3rd January 1996 (MH) was the first record from Borneo.

NEPAL

Several potential firsts for the country were reported: Four or five **White-bellied Minivets** *Pericrocotus erythropygius* in a mixed minivet flock at Sauraha, Chitwan on 9th January 1996 (PBe,IB), 12 **Finn's Weavers** *Ploceus megarhynchus*, in two different flocks, in the eastern part of grassland at Sukla Phanta, SW Nepal on 8th May (HB) and at least nine **Grey-headed Bullfinches** *Pyrrhula erythaca* in female type plumage at Nagarjung, Kathmandu Valley on 15th February 1996 (AB *et al.*). Interesting range records included an **Indian Pitta** *Pitta brachyura* in a garden at Ghairi Dhara, Kathmandu Valley on 25th May (PG), seven **Hume's Groundpeckers** *Pseudopodoces humilis* between Lhonak and Pangpema (*ca.* 5,000m elevation), below Kanchenjunga, NE Nepal on 8th November (SB,RW) and up to four **Jerdon's Bushchats** *Saxicola jerdoni*, including a singing male, at Sukla Phanta on 8th and 16th May (HB,OC). A count of up to 120 **Spot-billed Pelicans** *Pelecanus philippensis* made at Kosi Barrage, on 22nd March (PD), was the highest for the country to date. Interesting altitudinal records included three **Great Crested Grebes** *Podiceps cristatus* at Gokyo Lake (*ca.* 4,750m) on 24th May (TG,ML); also reported there in June 1992 (CM), a single **Common Green Magpie** *Cissa chinensis* at Phulchowki (*ca.* 2,300m), Kathmandu Valley on 24th November (HC) and two male **White-tailed Stonechats** *Saxicola leucura* reported from Phewa Tal (915m), Pokhara on 13th January 1996 (PBe,IB). A pair of **Yellow-vented Warblers** *Phylloscopus cantator* were seen carrying food near Num Bridge, by the Arun River on 25th April (DW,KW), providing the first breeding record for Nepal.

PAKISTAN

A trek to the Deosai Plateau, Baltistan on 13th-22nd July (JK), resulted in two interesting summer sightings, two female **Common Mergansers** *Mergus merganser* and three different pairs of **Brandt's Mountain Finches** *Leucosticte brandti* at separate sites.

SINGAPORE

The most interesting record received, was of 11 **Aleutian Terns** *Sterna aleutica* observed during a boat journey between south-west Singapore and Horsburgh Lighthouse, off south-east Johor, Peninsular Malaysia, on 13th October (SR). This is the first record for South-East Asia, following recent sightings in the Riau Archipelago (this issue). During the same trip, a total of 138 **Swinhoe's Storm Petrels** *Oceanodroma monorhis* were counted (SR). A subadult **Parasitic Jaeger** *Stercorarius parasiticus* offshore from Tanah Merah in 1996 (SR,RTe) was the second record. A probable **Thick-billed Warbler** *Acrocephalus aedon* was seen at Sungei Buloh on 8th April (SR), a potential first for the country. A **Barred Eagle Owl** *Bubo sumatranus*, heard calling at Bukit Timah Nature Reserve during 12th October to 14th December (SR) and seen on 16th November (PK,AL), was the first record since 1925; the bird was thought to have strayed from Peninsular Malaysia. Other rarities during the period under review included a single **Common Ringed Plover** *Charadrius hiaticula* at Changi Central on 20th October (SR), a single **Short-toed Snake Eagle**

Circaetus gallicus flying from Pulau Ubin towards Changi on 14th October (SR), two **Shikras** *Accipiter badius* at Marina South on 2nd November (SR), with one still present on 24th November (SR,PK,RO), single **Common Buzzards** *Buteo buteo* at Sentosa on 28th February 1996 and Changi Coastal Road on 12th December (both SR), single juvenile **Greater Spotted Eagles** *Aquila clanga* at Serangoon on 13th November and Sungei Buloh on 12th December (both SR) and a female **Japanese Paradise-flycatcher** *Terpsiphone atrocaudata* at Sime Forest on 14th November (SR). A single **Black-crested Bulbul** *Pycnonotus melanicterus* was seen at Bukit Timah NR on 19th December (IG); it is thought that this, like the few previous records, may relate to escaped cagebirds. The pair of **Grey-headed Fish Eagles** *Ichthyophaga ichthyaetus* at MacRitchie were observed at a nest during October-December (SR), the first recent breeding record. Also of interest was a single **Oriental Bay Owl** *Phodilus badius* heard calling at Bukit Timah NR on 17th October (SR).

THAILAND

A **Little Curlew** *Numenius minutus* seen and photographed on the golf course at Kasetsart University, Kamphaengsaen on 2nd November (PP,SRu,PS,SS) and still present on 16th November (RJ,PKr) was the second record for Thailand and a **Pied Avocet** *Recurvirostra avosetta* at Chiangsaen, Chiang Rai on 19th November (TK,RP,WY) was the third record. Other rarities seen recently included three or four calling **Lesser Cuckoos** *Cuculus poliocephala* at Mae Phu and Ban Khum, Doi Ang Khang, NW Thailand during 14-15th June (EH,NPr,UT), only the second time it has been recorded and evidence that it does in fact breed there, a single **Jack Snipe** *Lymnocryptes minimus* at Boh Klua Tai, Boh Klua District, Nan on 18th October (AG) and a **Brown-breasted Flycatcher** *Muscicapa muttui*, seen feeding young in streamside secondary forest in Doi Inthanon National Park (1,200m elevation) on 12th June (EH,NPr,UT); only the second or third record and confirmation that the species breeds in Thailand. A male **Narcissus Flycatcher** *Ficedula narcissina*, of the subspecies *elisae*, seen in Khao Yai National Park on 19th April (EC,HR), was apparently the first for NE Thailand, as were a **Brown-streaked Flycatcher** *Muscicapa williamsoni* reported singing in Thung Salaeng Luang National Park on 1st-2nd March (JD) and a single **Russet Sparrow** *Passer rutilans* reported from Thung Kamang, Phu Khieo Wildlife Sanctuary, Chaiyaphum on 24th November (SS). A male **Slaty-backed Flycatcher** *F. hodgsonii* was also reported from Khao Yai NP on 15th April (EC,HR). Amongst the rare waterbirds, there were two **White-winged Ducks** *Cairina scutulata* reported from near Ban Krun, Sawi District, Chumphon on 24th July (NN), a male **Masked Finfoot** *Heliopais personata* at Bung Mon, Phu Khieo WS from 16 June (ND) to at least 27th June, 19 **Painted Storks** *Mycteria leucocephala* near the headquarters of Bung Chawak Non-Hunting Area, Suphanburi on 17th June (JP) and eight **Black-headed Ibises** *Threskiornis melanocephala* at Thale Noi, Phatthalung on 5th May (NK,SP,WY). 18 **Von Schrenck's Bitterns** *Ixobrychus eurythmus* plummeting from the sky into a cashew orchard at Tha Ton, Chiang Mai on 1st May (EC,HR), provided something of a surprise. Coastal raptor migration included 600 **Black Kites** *Milvus migrans* over Khlong Khone, Samut Sakhon in October and another 300 there on 5th November, when a single **Steppe Eagle** *Aquila nipalensis* was noted (NP,VP,PR). A single dark morph **Booted Eagle** *Hieraaetus pennatus* was seen between Kaeng Krachan and Tha Yang Districts, Phetchaburi on 5th November (NP,VP,PR). Two **Short-tailed Parrotbills** *Paradoxornis davidianus* at Phu Soi Dao, Phitsanuloke on 22nd October (TK,JPo,RP) and an early **Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea* in Dusit District, Bangkok on 16th July (AW), were also interesting.

Short-tailed Parrotbill
Paradoxornis davidianus
by Dan Cole

VIETNAM

The most significant recent news has been the rediscovery of **Edwards's Pheasant** *Lophura edwardsi*, which was feared to have already become extinct. A pair were caught by a local man in secondary forest (300-400m elevation) in Phong Dien District, north-west Thua Thien Hue Province, C Annam (RE) in late summer. It is remarkable that it was rediscovered not far from the type locality. An expedition to Ngoc Linh, on the Gia Lai Kon Tum/Quang Nam Da Nang Province border during 10-18th May (JE *et al.*) – a peak in a previously unexplored range of mountains which extends into east S Laos (see Laos) – resulted in some very surprising discoveries. Of primary significance, was the discovery of a new taxon of barwing *Actinodura*, resembling **Spectacled** *A. ramsayi* but exhibiting a black crown and largely black wings and tail and an extremely distinctive new taxon of **Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrush** *Garrulax erythrocephalus* with bright golden and chestnut wing feather fringes. Three other babblers that were found here, **Rufous-winged Fulvetta** *Alcippe castaneceps*, **Rusty-capped Fulvetta** *A. dubia* and **Black-headed Sibia** *Heterophasia melanoleuca*, were all thought to be of previously undescribed taxa and, along with the last species, were all new records for C Annam. Other new species for C Annam recorded during this brief survey included **White-browed Shortwing** *Brachypteryx montana*, **Ferruginous Flycatcher** *Muscicapa ferruginea*, **Red-tailed Minla** *Minla ignotincta* and **Spectacled Fulvetta** *Alcippe ruficapilla*. A survey of Na Hang Nature Reserve, Ha Tuyen, E Tonkin during July to September resulted in sightings of some interesting species for this region, including **Besra** *Accipiter virgatus*, **Eurasian Hobby** *Falco subbuteo*, **Eurasian Cuckoo** *Cuculus canorus*, **Silver-backed Needletail** *Hirundapus cochinchinensis*, **House Swift** *Apus affinis*, **Crow-billed Drongo** *Dicrurus annectans*, **Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch** *Sitta castanea*, **Orange-headed Thrush** *Zoothera citrina* and **Chestnut-tailed Starling** *Sturnus malabaricus*. Three species reported last winter (AS), were all second records for the country and its respective ornithological regions; two adult **Relict Gulls** *Larus relictus* with **Black-headed Gulls** *L. ridibundus* near Hai Phong, E Tonkin on 10th January 1997, at least three **Ashy Tailorbirds** *Orthotomus ruficeps* at Vinh Long, Mekong Delta, Cochinchina on 20th December and a single **Brambling** *Fringilla montifringilla* at Sa Pa, W Tonkin on 31st December. Other noteworthy records during the current period included a **Spot-bellied Eagle Owl** *Bubo nipalensis* heard calling daily in Cuc Phuong National Park, E Tonkin around 5th December (FV), at least 92 **Pale-capped Pigeons** *Columba punicea* at Tuyen Lam, near Da Lat, S Annam on 16 December (CR *et al.*-Birdquest) and at least five **Pin-tailed Parrotfinches** *Erythrura prasina* in Cat Tien National Park, Cochinchina on 14th December (FV). An unidentified plain *Locustella* warbler, thought to be either **Gray's Warbler** *L. fasciolata* or possibly **Pleske's Warbler** *L. pleskei* was seen at Xuan Thuy, Red River Delta, E Tonkin on 27th December (CR *et al.*-Birdquest); neither species has previously been recorded from Vietnam or South-East Asia.

Contributors: H. Baral (HB), P. Benstead (PB), I. Berry (IB), P. Berry (PBe), Bird Conservation of Thailand reports (NK,SP,EC,HR), Birdquest, A. Booth (AB), H. Buck (HBu), S. Buckton (SB), G. Carey (GC), H. Choudhary (HC), O. Chundal (OC), P. Davidson (PD), A. Desay (AD), N. Drilling (ND), W. Duckworth (WD), J.N. Dymond (JD), J. Eames (JE), P. Edwards (PE), Earlybird, R. Eve (RE), I. Gamble (IG), P. Gay (PG), T. Giri (TG), A. Gordon (AG), E. Hagen (EH), M. Hale (MH), P. Holt (PH), (Hong Kong Birdwatching Society; JB,LB,GC,MC,DD,JE,JH,ML,PL,RL,DM,NM, RP,VP,GR,SR,JS,PS,IT,MT,YT,KW,MW,WY), J. Hornskov (JH), H. Jannes (HJ), R. Jugmongkol (RJ), R. Kanoje (RK), T. Kasitvivat (TK), P. Kennerley (PK), P. Krairojananan (PKr), J. Kylanpaa (JK), F. Lambert (FL), A. Lamont (AL), MR/S Laycock (ML), Lim Kim Chuah (LKC), I. Manoppo (IM), C. Murphy (CM), N. Nadee (NN), Ng Bee Choo (NBC), R. Ollington (RO), M. Parr (MP), J. Phanturak (JP), N. Philips (NP), R. Phimatai (RP), P. Pongchamnaphai (PP), M. Poulsen (MPo), J. Poungkao (JPo), N. Procton (NPr), S. Rajathurai (SR), Regulus, A. Relton (AR), C. Robson (CR), S. Rungkanakorn (SRu), P. Sasirat (PS), A. Schaftenaar (AS), Sunbird, S. Supparatvikorn (SS), A. Tansley (AT), R. Teo (RTe), R. Timmins (RT), S. Tomikawa (ST), U. Treesucon (UT), P. Undeland (PU), F. Verbelen (FV), L. Virthy (LV), Wang Luan Keng (WLK), A. Watanayut (AW), D. White (DW), K. White (KW), S. Whitehouse (SW), R. Wyatt (RW), W. Yusawat (WY), D. Zetterstrom (DZ).

Correction: In Bulletin 24 *From the Field*, we apologise for a mistake in the editing process. SSu records should refer to Sutari bin Supari.

Recently published

Wild Thailand *photographs by Gerald Cubit, text by Belinda Stewart-Cox, 1995, New Holland Ltd. in association with the Seub Nakhasathien Foundation London. 208 pp., £29.99 (hb). ISBN 85368 517 8*

When I was first given this book to review, I opened it at random, and immediately found a photograph of the enigmatic Mrs Hume's Pheasant *Syrmaticus humiae*, now restricted to a few mountains in northern Thailand. A bird which I would dearly love to see. In fact this book, like others in the series is full of beautiful colour photographs of habitat, flora and fauna. The book provides a general introduction to Thailand, including its geography, history, origins and evolution, climate, flora and fauna and wildlife habitats. Included in the latter is a very useful and clear guide to the various forest types which occur in Thailand. This introductory chapter ends with a stunning photograph of Huai Kha Khaeng and a discussion of conservation issues in Thailand.

The book then presents chapters on the various regions of Thailand, describing the major characteristics of the areas, the conservation areas and national parks. Each chapter is similarly packed with colour photographs. It is clear when reading the text that this book is written by someone who has a great deal of knowledge of the natural history of Thailand and who passionately believes in conservation. Indeed, the book is produced in association with the Seub Nakhasathien Foundation. Seub Nakhasathien was one of Thailand's most ardent supporters of wildlife conservation until his untimely death in 1990.

The one point which I find disappointing, though possibly understandable in the book is the origin of many of the photographs. Ideally one would expect all the photos of the mammals and birds to be taken in the wild, in Thailand. This appears not to be the case. Some appear to have been taken in captivity, or in the wild in another country. In the section on Thung Yai for example, the photograph of a small herd of Guar also appears in 'Wild India'. Similarly, the photograph of Water Buffalo in the section on Huai Kha Khaeng also appears in 'Wild India'. Whilst the book makes no claims about the sites at which many of the photographs were taken, it could be misleading and I know that some Thai naturalists are a little disappointed with this book for this very reason.

However, if one does not worry about the 'wild origin' of some of the photographs, then the book provides an excellent introduction to 'wild' Thailand. It is expensive, but nevertheless a worthy addition to the bookshelf of any naturalist interested in South-East Asia and Thailand. Its photographs certainly illustrate what can be seen in the various habitats and sites described. I often pick this book up, and look at the photos to remind myself of how much there is still to see in Thailand, including Mrs Hume's Pheasant!

David Blakesley

Where to watch birds in Asia *by Nigel Wheatley. 1996, A&C Black, London. 463 pages, over 100 maps and numerous line drawings. Hardback. £14.99.*

This is the third in the author's mini-series of 'Where to watch birds' books, the previous two having covered Africa and South America. This volume follows a similar format to the previous two. Following the short though useful introduction, the book is broken into two sections. The first covers 24 countries in Asia with the second covering 15 countries in the Middle East. Within each, the countries are set out alphabetically. For each country there is an introductory section which briefly covers such topics as transport, accommodation, health and safety, climate and timing, habitats, conservation, an indication of the number of species occurring in the country (including the number of endemics) and an indication of how many species/endemics a visiting birder may expect to see. There then follows site details with major, well known sites being covered in full and smaller sites covered briefly at the most logical point in the text. The sites generally follow an order that a visiting birder may wish to visit them. Within the book over 250 'major' sites are covered and there are more than 100 maps including excellent line maps of each country showing the approximate locations of the sites. As one would expect, some countries receive far more coverage than others. Cambodia for instance receives a little over one page of text whilst Indonesia has nearly fifty. Usefully, at the end of each chapter, there are lists of endemic and near-endemic species as well as a brief 'Additional Information' section which gives useful names and addresses and a few references for the country in question.

To use this book successfully, and in its intended manner, it is essential to read the introduction before delving into the mouth-watering lists of endemics! Firstly the author states that he intends the book to act as a 'guiding light' for birders visiting Asia. It would be unfair to treat it as a glorified trip report covering the whole of Asia and the author urges readers to carry out further research and gather up-to-date information before heading off on a trip. This is sound advice with new sites being found and more depressingly, old sites disappearing on a regular basis. It is also essential to read carefully the definitions for the terms used, such as 'specialities' given in the introduction, so as not to be misled (they are specialities of the area not the site and may be rare at the site). Of interest to many will be the marking of all threatened/near threatened species (as listed by BirdLife) with an asterisk (*) throughout the text. The author has also taken the sensible decision to follow one world checklist (Clements) throughout the book. Although the English names will not be to everyone's liking, this has been addressed to some extent by a list of alternative names at the rear of the book. What a shame the OBC checklist was not with us earlier!

I always feel that reviews concentrate too much on negative aspects rather than praising the positive aspects of books and I will point out at this stage that this book contains a huge, if bewildring, amount of excellent information. However, I do have some criticisms. I feel that the species listings for sites could have been improved. There is little indication of how likely an observer is to see a certain species and some of those listed are extremely unlikely to be seen. Other species in brackets at the end of the listings (such as Black-tailed Crake at Doi Inthanon and Japanese Cormorant at Arasaki) should undoubtedly have been listed as specialities. Indeed I often found the lists for sites I know misleading and felt the author would have been far better off using single lists concentrating on specialities for the site that are likely to be seen rather than the complicated and often inconsistent system he has used. Although the maps of sites are well produced, I would question the usefulness of them in a book which is only intended to act as a 'guiding light' and when more detailed maps will be found in up to date reports. The markings of some species at specific locations on the maps is superfluous (for instance I have seen Whitehead's Broadbill and Trogon on several of the trails at Mount Kinabalu). In addition some of the statements pertaining to sites are a little bold and misleading. For example, the degraded forests at Quezon National Park in the Philippines are certainly not the best on Luzon for seeing many of the species listed as such (indeed I have seen few of them there!). The numerous black and white vignettes are of variable quality and do little to enhance the book though this may be my personal taste. Finally, the list of species for which the author specifically requests more information is somewhat baffling in its brevity and content. Whilst listing relatively well-known species such as Painted Sandgrouse and Indian Courser there are simply dozens of little known non-listed species for which there are no good sites.

Despite the above criticisms, this book contains a wealth of interesting, accurate and current information and I congratulate the author for managing to condense such a vast amount into a single publication. It would not be difficult to start planning a different trip every time the book is delved into and the inclusion of relatively little known countries such as Laos, Burma and Cambodia gives the reader an insight into what may be possible in the future. In this respect the book largely achieves its objectives and at a mere £14.99 represents remarkable value for money. Anyone short of ideas for their next birding holiday or just interested in birding sites in Asia and the Middle East would be well advised to buy a copy.

Pete Morris

The Book of Indian Birds *by Salim Ali Revised & Enlarged edition Pub. Bombay Natural History Society & OUP India Rs395*

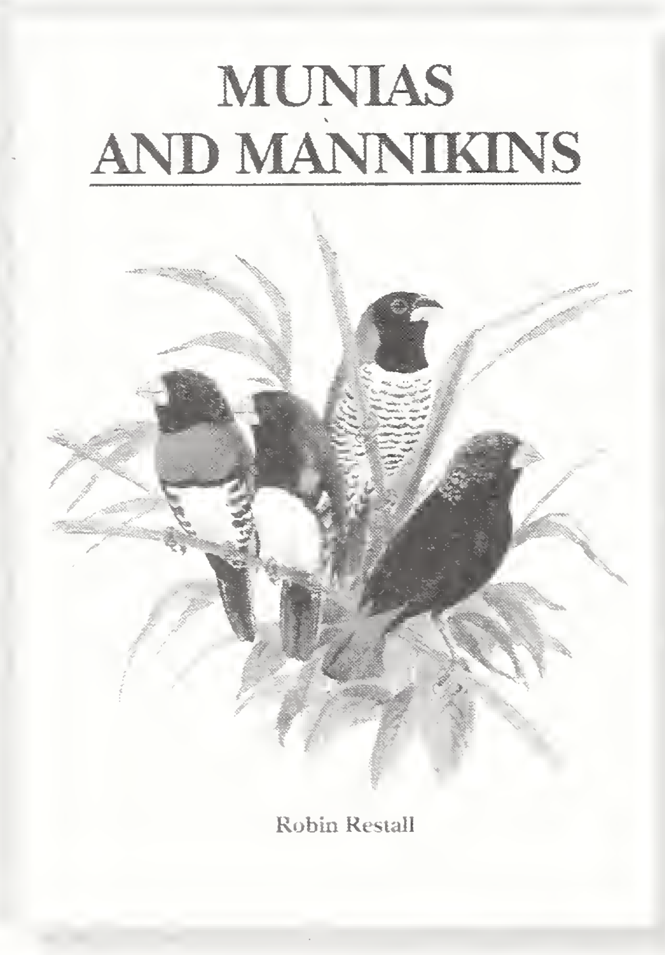
The bigger and better version of The Book of Indian Birds, published to celebrate the centenary of India's great ornithologist, illustrates 538 species compared to the old edition's 280. This makes it much less of a pocket book but Carl D'Silva's new illustrations more than make up for this. Although small, they are a great improvement on those in the old edition. Illustrations such as that of the Collared (Red-breasted) Falconet are better than those in the Pictorial Guide, still the most useful field guide as it has the maximum number of species, though with no detailed descriptions.

There's a new layout to Indian Birds too. The new book has all the plates at the front, with three or four lines of text about each bird on the facing page, and detailed descriptions after the plates. Those familiar with the Pictorial Guide will be relieved to find that in this book the illustrations are numbered logically and match the facing text in an orderly fashion. The indexing is also not as obtuse as in the Pictorial Guide, but neither is it as sensible as in the old Indian Birds which has an index which gives page numbers. The new book's index lists the number of the species in that ornithological Bible, the Handbook of Indian Birds, with the plate number in brackets. It would be much easier to refer to the detailed descriptions of the birds if page numbers were given.

And what are the new species? A great deal of sensible additions have been made, and many local names added. The Great Crested Grebe has been added, as well as the Great White (Rosy) and Dalmatian pelicans. There are more Bitterns. Many species, like the Large Cormorant, are given more space, instead of just a sentence or two in the description of one of their closest relatives.

The Book of Indian Birds has always been one of the standard introductory books to Indian Birds. Now with all the added species and illustrations, it can safely be said to have improved its position further.

Gillian Wright, New Delhi



Munias and Mannikins, *by Robin Restall, Pica Press, 1997, ISBN 1 873403 51 8*

This title is the first identification guide in the recent Pica Press Series to overlap significantly with the scope of one of the Helm Identification Guides. Many potential purchasers will surely wonder why the publishers brought out this book since the genus *Lonchura* has already been recently covered by 'Finches and Sparrows'. Does this book add anything to our knowledge of this genus of some 41 species (the author includes the two species of *Padda* - the Java and Timor Sparrows) and, above all, is it worth buying?

Some titles in the recent proliferation of identification guides in this format have had wonderful plates but texts have sometimes been lacking in the detail required for field identification, particularly at the subspecific level. In the case of plates, errors can be plain to see but these are harder to spot when hidden in text. Diligence in research and enthusiasm for the subject, supplemented with wide-ranging experience of the subject, are the keys to accuracy in the text. These are the features that separate the truly comprehensive and accurate guides in the series from the uninspired and rather lame attempts that occasionally appear. Indeed several rather damning reviews of recent volumes have recently appeared by respected birders based in the Americas, who suspect that the author(s) and in some cases the artists - have less than an intimate knowledge of their subjects! This is not however a criticism that can be levelled at Restall.

Much of the text of Munias and Mannikins is based on data collected by the author from extensive observations of captive birds and also of birds in the field. The author has held the majority of species in captivity and the resulting text is a synthesis of detailed first hand observations and wide-ranging research that has but few parallels amongst its contemporaries. If the main plates are rather simplistic by comparison with some recent works, all are serviceable and some actually very good. It is however the paintings of skins at the end of the volume that capture the attention - these are excellent. The whole impression is of a book by an author that knows his subject matter well and has taken the time to present an unhurried and authoritative account. The scope of the book under review, 41 species, most of which are primarily Asian or Australasian, has enabled a detailed account of each species to be presented. As an example the text on Scaly-breasted Munia runs to some eight pages - and includes a full description of the Bornean subspecies *holmesei* (described by Restall in 1995) - compared to just one and a half pages in 'Finches and Sparrows'. All biological 'subspecies' are described in full and, given the current (an seemingly valid) tendency to view stable and distinct forms as (phylogenetic) species, this serves to increase further the importance of this work.

For me the highlights of the book are the plates of Cream-bellied Munia *Lonchura pallidiventer* - a distinctive new Bornean form, described from captive specimens by Restall as recently as 1996. Even more intriguing is an as yet undescribed form - the Spot-sided Munia - known from only one skin, illustrated and detailed here. The validity of these forms as species remains to be tested in the field - indeed hybridisation within the genus can be widespread (as demonstrated by the case of Chestnut-breasted and Yellow-rumped Mannikins in Northern Australia). The determinations of the ranges of these forms in the field should perhaps be a conservation priority - despite the likelihood that these, like most of the *Lonchura*, are birds of edge or degraded habitats.

Only having seen about half of the species covered, I cannot comment extensively on the accuracy of the text as a whole but I can find no fault with text or plates for any of those species that I have seen. I have not searched pedantically for typographical errors and if there are mistakes, they are lost in the overall excellence of the volume. The author and publisher are to be congratulated for producing what appears to be the definitive work on the subject and in doing so redefines the standard for those titles in the series yet to come off the press. If you are interested in the genus itself or simply enjoy bird books of quality - buy this book.

Alan Lewis, Reading

Where to Watch Birds and other Wildlife in Hong Kong and Guangdong *by T. J. Woodward and G. J. Carey, Privately Published 1996, 16 colour pages, numerous line drawings, 31 maps. Price £15 incl. p and p. ISBN 962-85084-1-5*

The birds and wildlife of Hong Kong have probably been more closely studied than any other area in China, but in contrast, the adjacent province of Guangdong has been relatively neglected. Most foreign birders tend to skip straight through the province and on to the more bird rich areas of Yunnan and Sichuan. Hong Kong and Guangdong have an extremely varied fauna including over 400 species of birds and 150 species of mammals within a good selection of reserves - there are more than 30 in Guangdong.

This book starts with an extremely useful introduction which has all the necessary sections, such as transport, climate, visas *etc.* which are covered in detail. For instance, the transport section runs to four pages and covers everything from ferries, trains, buses and planes to three-wheel pick-ups and motorbikes. It even tells you where to buy cheap optical equipment from reputable dealers!

After this comes the site guide, starting with Hong Kong and covering 23 different localities. Some of these areas will be familiar to many, such as the famous Mai Po Marshes and the woodland of Tai Po Kau, with other less familiar places such as Dong Ping Chau and Shing Mun. Each site has a brief description of habitat, best areas or trails, how to get there, places to stay and food and drink available. All are thorough and reliable.

The province of Guangdong is split up into five sections using the capital of Guangzhou as a central marker. Some of the 'sites' around Guangzhou make miserable reading, for example the market which sells bear paws and the egretry where Night Heron chicks are harvested. I can't imagine why anyone would want to visit these!

The next sections are South, East, West and North of Guangzhou. These comprise some 48 pages and many of these sites will be unknown to the majority of birders, either visiting or resident in Hong Kong. There are no less than 73 different localities covered here, all with habitat details, visiting logistics and special birds. Ba Bao Shan is well covered, and indeed this is the most famous of Guangdong's mountain reserves. Many of the other sites are not covered in nearly so much detail, however this is not surprising as if they were, this would soon turn into a handbook rather than a guidebook. To be fair all the known good birding localities are well covered.

The next section is the maps which are all grouped together. The maps themselves are quite simplistic, clear, easy to interpret and look very easy to follow. Not all sites have a map, although many do not really need one, but all the major localities do have them. These maps are certainly one of the strong points of this book. A very useful feature is the place names which are also written in Chinese characters - anyone who has travelled in China will appreciate the value of these!

The final 50 pages of the book are taken up with checklists of birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians, all with their known status and finishing with a bibliography and an index of place names.

Throughout the book there are 16 pages of colour photographs, mostly of excellent quality, of either birds, animals or habitat and these add greatly to the attraction of the book as well as emphasising that this is more than just a site guide.

This is an excellent, well-researched and well-written book which deserves to succeed and I am sure that it will, especially in Hong Kong itself where I am sure it will appeal to the general public as well as those in search of the regions' wildlife. If you are visiting Hong Kong and/or South China do not do so without this wealth of information in your luggage, or you may very well regret not having bought it!

Graham J. Speight, Barnsley

The Avifauna of Yunnan China, vol. 1, non-passeriformes [Yunnan Niaolei Zhi], *edited by Yang Lan. Yunnan Science and Technology Press, Kunming, 1995. ISBN 7-5416-0553-0*

This impressive tome covers 316 non-passeriformes found in the south-western Chinese province of Yunnan. Inevitably, some species are treated in greater detail than others, with three or four pages devoted to some, *e.g.* the globally threatened Reeves's Pheasant *Syrmaticus reevesii* and Green Peafowl *Pavo muticus* and just a few lines for little known birds. There are distribution maps for many species and a lengthy bibliography. The text is in Chinese but scientific and English names are also given. We look forward to the publication of vol. 2, which is to cover 477 passeriformes.

Michael Rank, 40 Northchurch Rd, London N1 4EJ

Peafowl, their conservation, breeding and management *by T. P. Gardiner. World Pheasant Association, Reading, Berkshire, 1996. 87pp.*

Until the publication of this book, much of the detailed information on peafowl was contained in other more general books about pheasants and in articles written for ornithological and avicultural journals. Tom Gardiner describes all aspects of peafowl ecology, behaviour, captive management and breeding.

Peafowl, like many other Galliformes are facing threats to their survival. All three peafowl species, the Indian Peafowl *Pavo cristatus*, Green Peafowl *Pavo muticus* and the Congo Peafowl *Afropavo congensis*, are declining, mainly as a result of hunting and habitat loss. A chapter on conservation describes the threats facing peafowl today, conservation initiatives under way and the need for future action.

The book is well illustrated with six beautiful colour plates and many black and white photographs and line drawings. Unfortunately some of the references mentioned in the text are not listed.

Carol Inskipp, Cambridge

The Avifauna of Wuliangsuhai, Inner Mongolia *edited by Xing Lianlian and Yang Guisheng, University of Mongolia, Huhhot, China, 1996. 394pp. 130 line drawings, 113 distribution maps.*

Wuliangsuhai is one of the most important wetlands of China (see OBC Bulletin 18:15-16). From 1982 to 1995 the authors were engaged in ornithological research of Wuliangsuhai, the results of which were published in ten papers. This book is a systematic summary of their work.

The introduction describes the lake's natural environment, an analysis of the bird species recorded, the ecological distribution of bird species, and the importance of Wuliangsuhai in waterbird migration. The roles of dominant species in the ecosystem are discussed. The species accounts comprise a brief account of the main characteristics of all the genera and families, and detailed descriptions of all the species recorded including their ecological and economic significance. The book costs £15 plus £6.50 postage and packing overseas. Available from: Yang Guisheng, Department of Biology, University of Mongolia, Huhhot 010021, China.

Carol Inskipp

Towards an ornithology of the Himalayas: systematics, ecology and vocalizations of Nepal birds *(Bonner Zoologische Monographien, No. 38) by J. Martens & S. Eck (1995) 448 pp. DM 112*

A summary of the information collected on birds in Nepal during the course of seven trips to the country. General accounts of the different forest habitats and zoogeography (including a useful list of 608 Himalayan breeding species of birds) are followed by the species accounts. These accounts provide information on taxonomy, measurements of the 218 species collected, distribution (including altitudinal range), habitat, breeding and vocalizations.

There is new information on the taxonomy of the Large-billed Crow *Corvus macrorhynchos* and tits of the genera *Aegithalos* and *Parus*, additional data on the Nepal Wren Babbler *Pnoepyga immaculata* (first described by these authors in 1991), and a great deal of information on habitats and vocalizations for a large number of species.

Tim Inskipp

CD-ROM REVIEW

Voices of the Borneo Rainforest *by Rob Steubing. Produced by The Really Useful Company Sendirian Berhad, Malaysia. One CD, $17.95 + $3 P&P, available from Borneo Company, 10 Locust Hill, Cincinnati, OH 45245.3114, USA.*

Anyone who has visited lowland rainforest will be impressed by the huge variety of natural sounds emanating from therein. Indeed, many rainforest animals are considerably easier to hear than to see. 'Voices of the Borneo Rainforest' comprises approximately 55 minutes of recordings of birds and other wildlife made at Danum Valley in Sabah, E. Malaysia, and should make life a bit easier! The CD comprises two parts: 'Dawn to Dusk' is a sequence of recordings, condensed into one track of approximately 30 minutes, while part two consists of 32 individually identified cuts of bird species.

'Dawn to Dusk' gives a wonderful feel of the diurnal rhythm of rainforest activity: a busy dawn chorus gradually subsides to the relative quiet of midday, before cicadas start up in the afternoon. A number of non-avian calls, including frogs, geckos, and grasshoppers are identified. As well as being aesthetically pleasing, these offer a chance to become familiar with some rainforest noises which often masquerade as unknown birds! This sequence is a single cut, which would make identification of individual species difficult were it not for the start times for each species being given in the accompanying sleeve notes. However, accessing individual calls can be difficult and requires a certain degree of attention to the CD-player counter. Some calls start shortly before the time given in the sleeve notes, and some non-avian calls are not very obvious (at least to this reviewer).

However, part one is intended as a listening experience, while part two is more of an identification guide to Bornean rainforest bird sounds. Individually numbered cuts enable easy access to 32 species, most of which are frequently encountered in lowland Malaysian rainforest. However, several little-recorded species are found on the CD, including Bornean Bristlehead (though not the full call that I am familiar with, which is truly amazing), Bornean Wren-Babbler, Bornean Blue Flycatcher and Crested Fireback. Some of the recordings are a little quiet, and the Green Imperial Pigeon in particular is almost inaudible.

Both parts of the CD are accompanied by attractive and informative sleeve notes, which detail some interesting behaviour of the species recorded. Production notes for the dawn to dusk sequence provide additional information and help identify some of the calls not indicated in the track-listing.

With the few reservations noted above, the quality of recordings is excellent, and is undoubtedly the result of substantial post-production effort to eliminate background noise which can hamper rainforest bird-recording. I would recommend this CD not only to anyone planning a birding trip to Malaysia, but also to those who have already been and yearn for the sounds of the Bornean rainforest.

Seb Buckton, Cardiff

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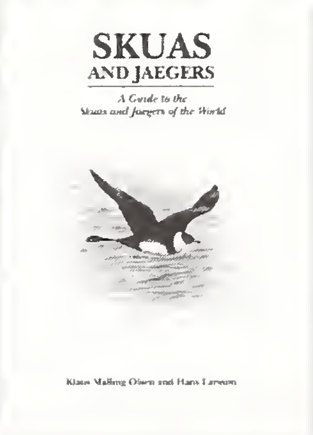
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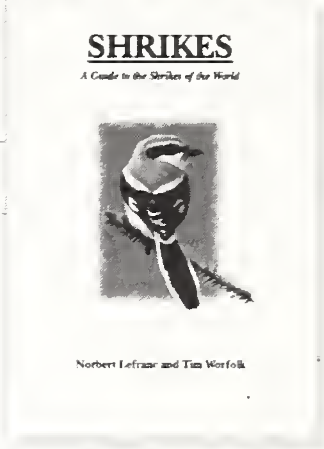
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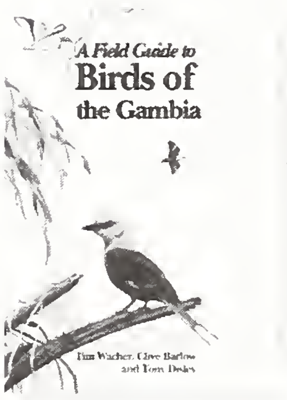

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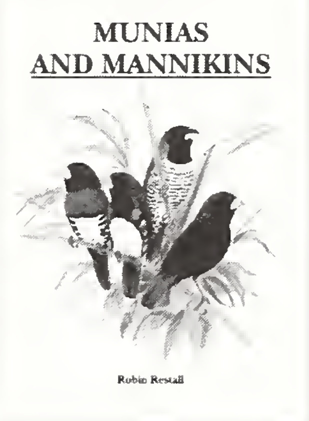

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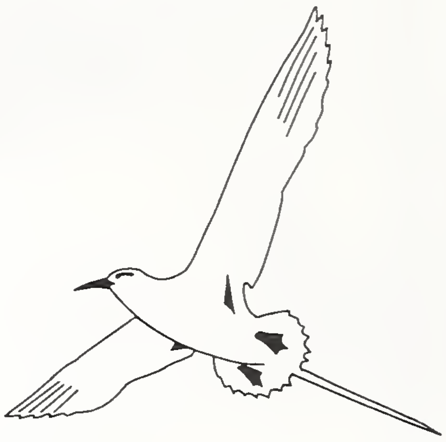

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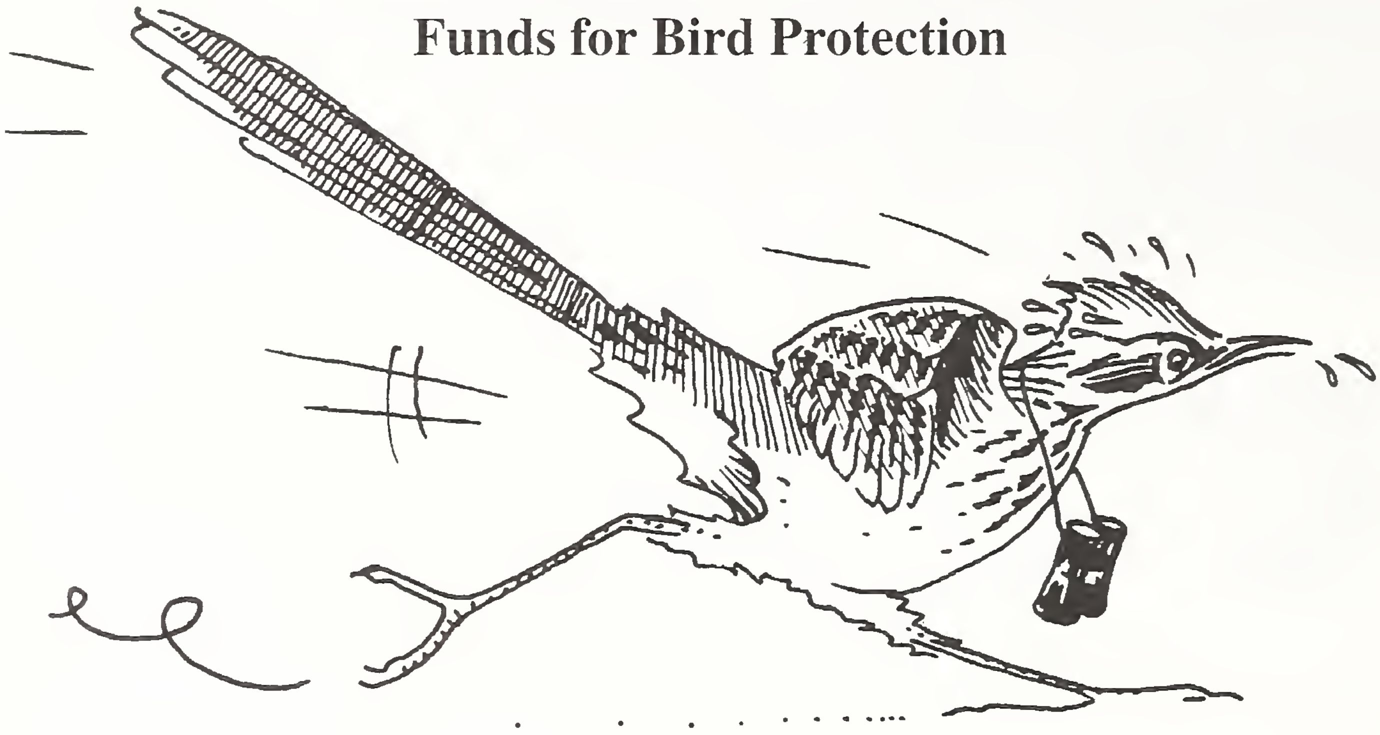

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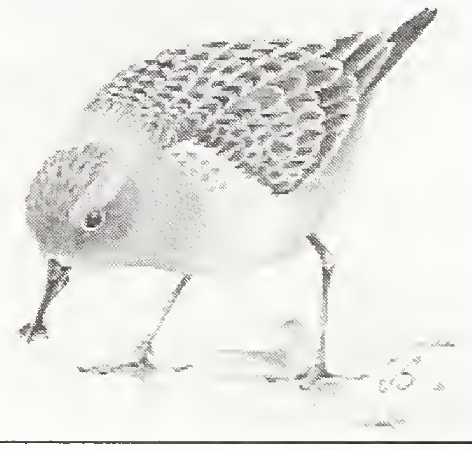

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Whilst the Editor is always pleased to discuss possible contributions with potential authors, and to advise on preparation, it would be helpful if the following guidelines could be adhered to:

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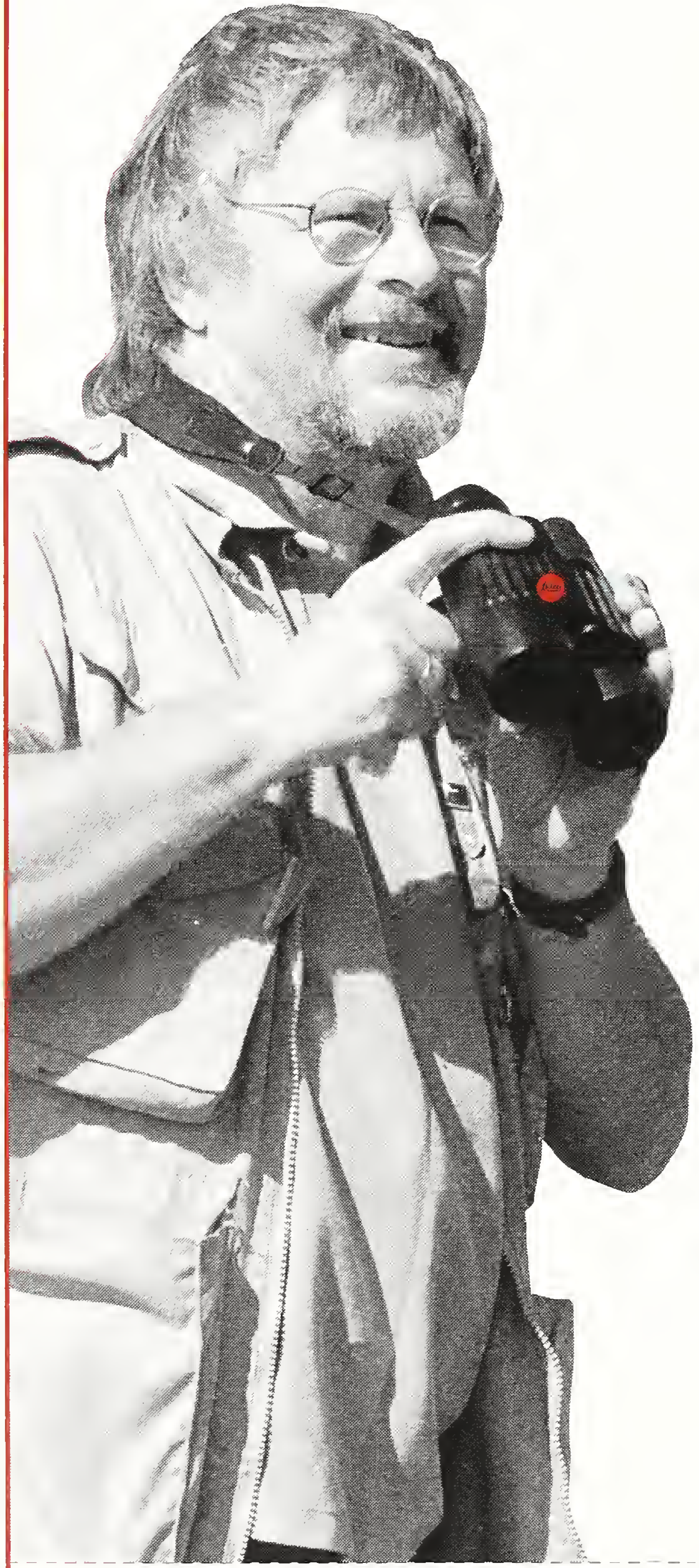

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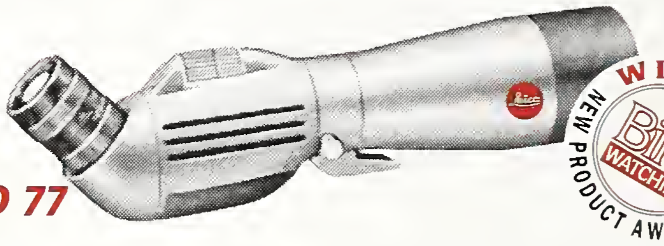

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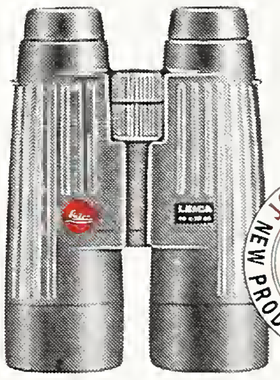

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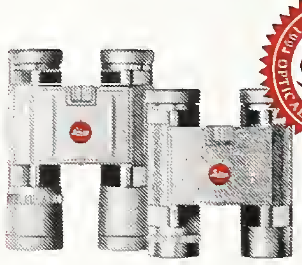

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